

The Public Communication Model

Adapted for Turnagain Pass from Parks Canada ATEs Model (v.1/04)
Use this Model to express personal classifications

Class 1 -	Exposure to low angle or primarily forested terrain. Some forest openings involve the runout zones of infrequent avalanche paths. Numerous options exist to reduce or eliminate exposure. Avalanche exposure in this terrain is SIMPLE to manage.
Class 2	Exposure to well defined avalanche paths, start zones or terrain traps. Some Slopes are steeper than 35 degrees. Options to reduce or eliminate exposure do exist. Avalanche exposure in this terrain is CHALLENGING to manage.
+ Class 3	Exposure to multiple overlapping avalanche paths, expanses of steep open terrain, unavoidable overhead exposure. No options exist to reduce or eliminate exposure. Avalanche exposure in this terrain is COMPLEX .

The Personal Communication Model

Adapted for Turnagain Pass from Parks Canada ATEs Model (v.1/04) & SE Alaska Avalanche Center Terrain Classification Table

[Avalanche Terrain Exposure Elements]

Indicate Default Elements	Route Options	Slope Angle	Terrain Traps	Avalanche Frequency	Interaction with Paths	Exposure Time	Start Zone Density	Slope Shape
Class 1 -	Multiple options to reduce or eliminate exposure	Angles generally < 30°	Minimal, some creek slopes and cutbanks	1:30 ≥ size 2 (events: years)	Runout zones only	None or limited exposure crossing runouts only	Limited open terrain	Uniform
Class 2	Options DO exist to reduce or eliminate exposure	Mostly low angle, isolated slopes > 35°	Some depressions, gullies and prone overhead terrain	1:1 for < size 2 1:3 for ≥ size 2	Single path or separate paths	Isolated exposure to start zones and tracks	Some open terrain or paths leading to valley floor	Some convexities
+ Class 3	Limited options to reduce exposure, avoidance not possible	Variable with large % > 35°	Many cliffs, cornices, hidden slopes and gullies	1:1 < size 3 1:1 ≥ size 4	Numerous and overlapping paths	Frequent exposure to start zones, runouts, terrain traps	Large expanses of open terrain with Unavoidable overhead exposure	Convolved Prone convex and concave slopes and long runouts

The Turnagain Pass Hazard Communication Models: The personal model becomes the intellectual property of its users.



Non-motorized terrain use is the focus of this project.

ATES and Turnagain Glisse

Story by Sean McManamy

Glisse is adapted from the mountaineering term glissade and the French verb *glisser*. It is meant to encompass every method of controlled downhill sliding on a metal-edged board. Last year on Sunburst, my party and I allowed intricate reasoning to justify skiing a slope too steep for conditions. Had our party stuck to terrain-based decisions, that mountainside would not have slid on top of us. (*watch for further analysis of this accident in TAR 27/4*)

Voluntary exposure to avalanche hazard is inherent to avalanche-terrain use. The Canadian Avalanche Terrain Exposure Scale (ATES) classifies terrain for avalanche education and hazard mitigation. The scale's effectiveness is rooted in simplicity – using numbers and colors it communicates a party's degree of exposure in a user-friendly format. It empowers users to assess the exposure they volunteer and the significance of options to reduce it. The ATES offers a systematic approach to managing exposure with concise discourse. It provides a universal concept relevant in south-central Alaska and specifically Turnagain Pass: manage your terrain exposure first.

Avalanche-terrain users make decisions based on experience. Users with less experience travel in terrain varying in exposure and weight heavily on professional input. Advanced users spend more time in complex terrain and base decisions more on personal assessment.

This pilot curriculum, *Turnagain Glisse: Information for Avalanche Terrain Use*, offers specialized materials to an active community in a region of high consequence. Originally, my intent was to change ATES text descriptors and its colors from the ski area scheme green, blue, and black to the oh-so-American stoplight green, yellow, and red. The priority was to map and classify popular glisse areas. Limitations to this application ranged from a lack of motorized use and knowledge, to limited agency participation.

Now the focus is on dropping the Parks Canada ATES Custodial Group Policy, (government involvement clashes with the Last Frontier mindset) and morphing the Technical Model into the Personal Communication Model. Doing so makes terrain classifications the intellectual property of its user. The challenge to this application is fine-tuning these models to be more effective for users who spend their time on either end of the scale. The Southeast Alaska Avalanche Center addresses this issue with the Terrain Classification Table. Their table adds a zero and ± principles to the matrix. It relates clearly to its local avalanche terrain. In this context, the scale is an effective education tool for the level-one student. As the matrix evolves, terrain-based decisions move to the forefront of avalanche education, uniting a multitude of different disciplines.

While minor ATES change is inevitable, continuity in North American dialogue takes precedence. In Canada, the ATES provides pertinent long-term information. Locally it is the backbone of efficient education tools.

I acknowledge all lovers of glisse but especially, Sean Brennan, Grant Statham, Alaska Avalanche Specialists, Brad Cosgrove, and Caitlin Hague.

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