



Alaska Avalanche School

Level 1 Avalanche Course

The Alaska Avalanche School (AAS) is based in Anchorage, Alaska. AAS has been providing cutting-edge education about avalanches, avalanche hazard, and avalanche rescue for over 45 years. The mission of the Alaska Avalanche School is to provide exceptional hands-on snow and avalanche education to all snow athletes at all levels. Each season, AAS teaches hundreds of students, youth and adults, with an independent curriculum that meets American Avalanche Association guidelines. Our commitment is to provide the highest quality training possible. What you learn will depend upon how hard you work prior to and during your course. We'll provide you with innovative materials, quality instruction, and a safe learning environment. The rest is up to you. Please read the following information carefully.

Nonprofit School

Student tuition alone does not cover the total course cost. Funding for these programs is derived from individual donations, in-kind contributions, and program receipts from educational workshops. If you desire to contribute to the school, we graciously accept donations.

Food

Students are responsible for all of their food during the course. All lunches will be in the field, so plan accordingly.

Course Schedule

This 24-hour course will be a combination of lectures and hands-on learning. The day to day itinerary varies by course location and time of year. Please look for an email with course specifics 30-days out from your course start. In general you should prepare for up to 6-hours of field time each day.

AAS Avalanche Course Gear List

AAS students must be prepared for a variety of challenging conditions during the outside field portions of our courses. Depending on conditions, you may not need or use every single item listed below. Your time outside may fluctuate between periods of inactivity (standing for a demonstration, viewing, and discussions of terrain and snow conditions) and high activity for backcountry travel to relevant terrain. Courses head out into the field in all weather conditions. Be prepared for snow, rain, wind, sun, arctic temperatures and everything in between.

Technical Equipment: required for all field portions of the course

___**Transceiver:** Digital with direction arrows and marking feature. **Must be less than 5 years old.** AAS choice: Mammut Barryvox.

___**Batteries:** Always carry an extra set of batteries for your beacon. Only a few beacon models accept lithium or rechargeable so please consult your owners manual.

___ **Probe***: Must be at least 280cm. A quality probe will have cable instead of string to hold it together and a quick and easy locking mechanism. AAS choice: Black Diamond Quickdraw Carbon 280 or 320 Probe. Ski pole probes are not acceptable.

___ **Shovel***: Must be a metal backcountry avalanche shovel. **No plastic shovels.** Avoid cheap shovels such as brands sold at Costco and Fred Meyer. AAS choice: Black Diamond Evac or Voile Telepro.

___ **Snow Saw***: Required. AAS choice: G3 Bonesaw, Primomo El Profesional, or MSR Beta Saw.

___ **Inclinometer***: Any type. This may be included in a compass, as a swinging weight on a plastic card or bubble type. AAS choice: AAS inclinometer card.

___ **Extended Column Test Cord*** 3 meters (10') of 3mm cord with overhand knots every 15cm (6")

Travel: practice and be familiar with your gear before the course

Note: you can use skis, snowshoes, splitboard or snowshoes combined with a snowboard.

___ **Skis:** Alpine touring or telemark skis with bindings and skins for uphill travel. Make sure your boots and bindings are sized to match and the DIN is set appropriately.

___ **Snowshoes:** They must have metal teeth for ascending and descending steep slopes. AAS choice: MSR Lightning Ascent.

___ **Snowboard:** If you bring a snowboard for descents, please bring snowshoes and collapsible ski poles.

___ **Split Board:** In combination with a pair of skins for traveling uphill.

___ **Skins:** For use with your skis or split-board. Skins are essential for uphill travel. Make sure they are trimmed to your boards and that they work before arriving to your class. AAS choice: Black Diamond Ascension or G3 Alpinist.

___ **Ski Poles:** Mandatory for everyone. Everyone needs these for quick tests. AAS choice: Black Diamond Traverse for skier/snowshoe and the Expedition or Compactor for snowboard/split-board.

___ **Helmet:** Optional but recommended. Ski or snowboard helmet.

___ **Elastic Ski Strap:** Recommended to hold your skis and poles together. Also useful for emergency repair. AAS choice: Titan strap.

Day Pack Essentials

___ **Backpack:** 30 to 45 liters. This needs to be big enough to carry all of your gear inside your pack for the field portions of the course. AAS choice: An specific backcountry backpack with dedicated rescue tools pocket.

___ **Lunch Food:** This should be field type snack food that does not freeze. Bring plenty. There is not typically a designated lunch break. Instead we eat at short breaks throughout the day.

___ **Water Bottle:** 1+ liters or a thermos. AAS choice: Nalgene 32-oz wide mouth.

___ **Sunglasses:** Good to have even in mid-winter as a backup to your goggles.

___ **Headlamp:** Bring extra batteries. AAA alkaline to match your beacon batteries?

___ **Extra Clothing:** Gloves/mittens and warm puffy jacket. Be prepared for all types of weather: rain, snow, wind or sun.

___ **Notebook and Pencil:** To take notes. Bring extra pencils. AAS pick: Rite in the Rain weatherproof paper.

___ **Goggles or Sunglasses**

___ **Hand Sanitizer**

___ **Hand/Foot Warmers:** Optional. These are helpful during blustery cold days.

___ **First Aid Kit:** Optional. A small simple kit for blisters and cuts. Ibuprofen, Tylenol, personal prescriptions, etc. Instructors will have a larger kit on hand.

Clothing

Do not bring cotton. It holds moisture and dries slowly leaving the user cold and wet. Synthetic and wool layers dry out quickly and they do not lose their warmth even when damp. A winter environment is conducive to hypothermia, and you will miss out on class time if you are sitting inside because you are cold.

___ **Long Underwear Top and Bottom:** Light to mid-weight synthetic or wool.

___ **Mid-Weight Top and Bottom:** Polartec or light fleece top. Bottoms for extra cold conditions.

___ **Hard Shell Top and Bottom:** Wind and waterproof/breathable with Gore-Tex or equivalent. Pants should fit over boots.

___ **Gaiters:** To keep snow out of your boots. Most ski/snowboard pants have these built in.

___ **Warm socks:** Synthetic or wool. Make sure they fit comfortably with the boots you will be wearing. A common mistake is to wear two pairs of socks that are too thick, which constricts blood flow and creates cold feet.

___ **Warm Hat*:** Fleece or wool. AAS choice: AAS logo wear!

___ **Warm Gloves/Mittens***: Bring a few pairs of varying warmth.

___ **Glove liners**: A good combination for with heavy gloves/mittens. Important for warmth when taking notes, packing, etc.

___ **Insulated Parka**: Synthetic or down puffy with hood. Your parka should fit over all of your other layers and be warm. This is helpful when standing around outdoors on the field portion of the course. Bring two if it is to be extra cold or if you tend to get cold easily. AAS choice: Patagonia Micro puff or DAS parka, Wild Things Belay Parka.

___ **Puffy Pants**: Or puff skirt. Optional. This is a parka for your legs. Good for sub-zero temps. AAS choice: Mountain Hardwear Compressor pant or Patagonia DAS pant.

___ **Boots**: Assure they are warm and comfortable enough to stand around in the cold for an hour or more. No leather hiking boots as they are not warm enough. A good pair of boots is essential to being happy outside on cold days. If you have any doubts, spend a day outside in cold temperatures testing them before the course. Please break in your boots to avoid cold feet and blisters. **These are your ski boots or snowboard boots if you are touring in this set-up.**

Food

You are required to bring all of your food for the full duration of the course. Trail food is best suited for lunch.

Optional for Level 1 Courses. Required for Level 2.

___ **Field Data Notebook***: AAS recommends the Snowpit Technologies Field Notebook.

___ **SWAG Book***: Snow, Weather and Avalanche Observation Guidelines (SWAG)

___ **Compass**: Some compasses have an inclinometer built in. AAS choice: Silva Ranger.

___ **Magnifying Lens/Loupe***: AAS recommends Carson LL-10 LumiLoupe 10.

___ **Crystal Card***: AAS recommends the Snowmetrics blus card.

___ **Folding Ruler or Marked Probe***: marked in centimeters.