

INTRODUCTION TO THE AAI BACKCOUNTRY CHECKLIST

Pre-Trip Plan:

1. Current conditions:

- Recent Avalanches
- Weather
- Avalanche Forecast

- Found on your local avalanche forecast or avalanche.org and on your regional weather forecast
- Direct observations.

2. Avalanche Problems:

- Loose Snow
- Storm Slab
- Wind Slab
- Wet Slab
- Persistent Slab - extra caution
- Deep Slab – extra caution
- Cornice Fall
- Glide Avalanches

This influences your tour for the day

- What does the forecast identify?
- Level of uncertainty?
- Manageability?

3. Route/Terrain:

Appropriate for groups & conditions

- Closed
- Standby
- Open

- ID a route on a topographic map
- Evaluate terrain manageability via photos and trip reports
- Measure slope angles on a topo map
- Estimate travel times

Closed Terrain

Off limits for the day. This may be due to current conditions, recent avalanches, or group dynamics.

Standby Terrain

Terrain that you would consider traveling in, but need more information.

Uncertainty exists.

Open terrain

Terrain appropriate for current conditions and group. This is terrain deemed appropriate for current avalanche problems, current snow and weather conditions, and for the group traveling in the backcountry for the day. Contrary findings in the field trump pre-trip plan. Be prepared to adjust open terrain based on findings in the field.

4. Concerns with Plan:

- Build a team.
- All members need a voice.
- Is everyone in agreement?

5. Travel and Rescue Gear:

• **AVALANCHE SAFETY:**

* Denotes optional gear

- Avalanche beacon (with fresh batteries)
- Avalanche shovel
- Avalanche probe
- Inclinator (or compass/slope angle app on a smart phone)
- Pencil

Recommended:

- Snow Saw
- Crystal card
- Hand lens
- Compass
- Snow and avalanche field book

• **SKIING/SNOWBOARDING:**

- Skis or snowboard
- Boots
- Ski Poles
- Climbing skins
- Backpack (22-30L) with a carrying system for skis or snowboard
- Goggles
- Helmet*
- Repair kit or spare binding parts*

• **MISCELLANEOUS:**

- Water bottle 1-2L (and/or thermos)
- Food for the day
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Lip Balm with SPF
- Small first aid kit*
- Pocket knife or multi tool*
- Map & compass*
- Camera*

• **RECOMMENDED CLOTHING**

- Ski jacket or shell
- Soft shell jacket*
- Ski pants or bibs
- Down or synthetic insulated jacket
- Warm gloves and/or mittens
- Warm hat
- Brimmed hat or visor
- Neck gaiter, Buff™, or Scarf