



canadianavalancheassociation

**2017 to 2020
Strategic Plan**

*Approved by the CAA Board of Directors:
March 1, 2017*

Table of Contents

Introduction3

The Canadian Avalanche Association - Who Are We?4

Our Vision.....4

Our Mission4

Our Core Organizational Values.....4

2017-2020 Goals and Objectives6

Objectives:.....8

Appendix - Terminology..... 10

Introduction

This four-year strategic plan was developed by the CAA Board of Directors and senior staff in a process that began in early in 2016. The Board listened to CAA Members at the 2016 AGM who affirmed the direction of the 2013-16. That plan led to significant achievements on the CAA's professional path while setting forth guiding elements that set directions for other areas of the association. This plan updates the 2013-2016 Strategic plan, focusing on clarifying elements of the professional path and updating goals and objectives with more recent context. The initial draft was reviewed by the committees of the CAA in the fall of 2016 and then put to the membership for consultation.

As with previous strategic plans for the CAA, this is a living document: The plan's goals will be reviewed and prioritized annually. Member feedback on this process is encouraged. Comments can be sent to the CAA President at president@avalancheassociation.ca. Key themes that informed the development of this plan are summarized below.

The CAA's professional path

An update on the professional path was provided to members at the 2016 Annual General Meeting. The update was well-received and all new board members affirmed their commitment to seeing through the work embarked under the professional path goal. Since then, The Board of Directors, based on feedback from members, is unanimous that directing focus and resources towards achieving clear outcomes that define and advance professional avalanche practice in Canada is essential to meet the needs of the CAA's members, regulators and the general public.

Integration of effort

The objectives of this plan were designed to ensure that, wherever appropriate, committees, staff, and the board understand and actively engage each other and the membership, to achieve our shared goals.

Organizational Efficiency

Whether the CAA's revenues come from members, industry operators, students or other sources, the board and staff assigned to applying these resources will make every practical effort to plan and execute programs efficiently and responsibly. By doing so, we will keep fees down to ensure fairness to members, and keep expenses within our means. This approach will safeguard our long-term organizational sustainability. The updated plan makes some changes to reflect valuing intellectual property more clearly.

Updated Vision, Mission, and Values

A few changes are made to the substance of the Vision, Mission and Values of the CAA. These changes are limited to phrasing that has been altered for clarity.

The Canadian Avalanche Association - Who Are We? ¹

Our Vision

The Canadian Avalanche Association earns the confidence of Canadian public in the programs and services delivered by CAA members.

Our Mission

We ensure that our diverse membership of avalanche practitioners meets the highest standards, and adheres to best practices to secure the confidence of governments, industry, and Canadians.

We do this by:

- Protecting the public interest by ensuring members adhere to the CAA's Code of Ethics.
- Representing CAA members who are professionally engaged in avalanche work in Canada.
- Maintaining, monitoring and enforcing standards of education and qualifications for continued membership in the association.
- Facilitating the exchange of technical information between persons engaged in avalanche safety programs.
- Supporting public avalanche awareness by acting as a resource base.
- Encouraging and promoting avalanche safety research and development.
- Providing professional avalanche education.

Our Core Organizational Values

Leadership: We lead by advancing professional avalanche education, knowledge and professionalism, fostering the trust of the general public, and shaping our own future.

Collaboration: We collaborate and draw upon the collective wisdom and knowledge of members, committees, staff, stakeholders and the public to help reach our goals and strengthen our organization.

Transparency: We build trust by embracing and demonstrating transparency to the public, regulators and members whenever possible.

Accountability: We take ownership and responsibility for the organization's actions and decisions.

Integrity: We demonstrate integrity by looking to these values at all times, and acting appropriately. This fosters good faith in the public, the organization, and members.

¹ The terminology for this section is detailed in the Appendix.

Stewardship - We responsibly plan and manage our human, fiscal and intellectual property resources appropriately for the short-term and for the future of our organization.

2017-2020 Goals and Objectives

Introduction

Each of the six goals below address an overall outcome the CAA wants to achieve, and is supported by more specific objectives. This plan assumes that while it is valuable to identify high-level goals, it is not very helpful or realistic to identify detailed objectives or strategies more than one to two years out. From a managerial perspective, objectives are supported by strategies and associated work plans that provide specific guidance to the Board, Committees and Staff. These detailed strategies and work plans are not included in this document.

Focus and Priorities

This plan includes six goals with their supporting objectives. Not all goals or objectives are of the same priority, nor do they all require the same amount of resources to achieve. As such, the board and staff focus on the most important objectives to achieve in the current year of the plan, which are supported by strategies and work plans.

The board will re-visit the plan and its objectives annually to assess the organization's progress and reprioritize goals to best achieve our vision and mission.

Goal 1: CAA's Professional Path

The CAA establishes a professional self-regulatory model that protects the public interest, while meeting the needs of CAA members, regulators and industry.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Promote understanding of the [Scope of Practice Statement](#), approved by the Board of Directors in 2014, to CAA members and external stakeholders, and monitor its effectiveness in protecting the public interest and the practice of CAA members.
- 1.2 Promote understanding of the [Code of Ethics](#), approved by the CAA membership in 2014, to CAA members and external stakeholders, and monitor its effectiveness in protecting the public interest and the practice of CAA members.
- 1.3 Evaluate what **additional Practice Standards** are required, if any, to define and assess work by CAA members following the 2016 release of [Technical Aspects of Snow Avalanche Risk Management \(TASARM\): Resources and Guidelines for Avalanche Practitioners in Canada](#).
- 1.4 Complete a robust [Continuing Competency Program](#) that ensures excellence in practice and a culture of accountability for members. The public and stakeholders trust this process.
- 1.5 Evaluate the need for a **Risk of Harm Analysis** for the CAA given the development of Competency Profiles completed in 2015.

- 1.6.1 Promote and monitor the effectiveness of the [Competency Profiles](#), developed in 2015 for the CAA's Practitioner 1 and 2 levels to govern professional avalanche practice, ensuring that they are safe, effective and ethical.
- 1.6.2 Develop a P3 Competency Profile or alternative tool that defines competency for advanced practitioners, addressing needs not addressed by the P2 Profile.
- 1.7.1 Define **Entry to Practice Requirements** for Active and Professional Members based on the Competency Profiles. These are identified to ensure only qualified individuals gain entry into the profession.
- 1.7.2 Define a set of **Practice Requirements** or an alternative tool to provide assurance of competence for members practicing at advanced levels, beyond those defined by the P2 Competency Profile.
- 1.8a) Clearly communicate and engage CAA members as the CAA's direction and achievements under Goal 1 evolves.
- 1.8b) Clearly communicate the CAA's direction and achievements to Key stakeholders, such as Avalanche Canada; Association of Canadian Mountain Guides; professional engineering and forestry practitioner associations; Helicat Canada; Backcountry Lodges of BC; various governments and others.
- 1.9 Ensure that all existing guidelines, standards and requirements pertaining to CAA member practice receive appropriate review for currency and accuracy by committees or other resources, so updates and revisions can be planned for and implemented in a timely manner.

Goal 2: Education

The [CAA's education programs](#) earn the confidence of members, students, regulators, industry and the public as the highest standard available for building essential foundations of avalanche practice.

Objectives:

- 2.1 The CAA's educational process is aligned to prepare students to meet components of Entry to Practice requirements articulated in Goal 1.
- 2.2 Practitioners, industry and regulators understand, participate, and support continuous improvement for creating or modifying curriculum to address the required competencies for avalanche practice in Canada.
- 2.3 The CAA offers accessible and relevant educational resources to meet student/member needs through workshops, web-based learning, and other educational tools.

Goal 3: Membership

The value of CAA membership earns the recognition of its members, industry, and regulators. Regulators and the public support the enforcement of CAA membership requirements.

Objectives:

- 3.1 Members in all categories understand and value membership obligations and benefits.
- 3.2 Industry, regulators and the public increasingly seek out CAA membership as a requirement or strong preference for avalanche risk management services.
- 3.3 The CAA maintains and expands the CAA's membership to provide a strong credible voice for its members to other professions, to industry, regulators and to the general public.
- 3.4 CAA membership categories and their requirements are revised to meet CAA goals, Entry to Practice Requirements, and the CAA Scope of Practice.

Goal 4: Governance

Governance of the CAA's board, committees and staff is principled, effective, and transparent to the satisfaction of members, industry, regulators and the public.

Objectives:

- 4.1 The CAA board is consistently engaged, transparent and accountable as it meets its obligations.
- 4.2 A clear succession plan is in place for the board and committees, and (where appropriate) the staff, to preserve and extend members' engagement, and to ensure CAA roles are filled with individuals with appropriate skills and experience.
- 4.3 The board, committees and staff stay current with external and internal issues affecting the membership, the association, and its assets.
- 4.4 The CAA's bylaws are updated as needed to support the association's goals and effective governance. Board, committees and staff are engaged in bylaw changes and update policies and procedures accordingly.
- 4.5 Terms of Reference (ToR) for committees are developed for all CAA Committees. Committee output is regularly reviewed and ToRs are updated as the needs of the CAA evolve.
- 4.6 The CAA monitors and anticipates potential conflicts of interest among staff, committees, and the Board of Directors to ensure the organization is able to pursue its

mission with integrity, securing confidence of its various partners, stakeholders and the public.

Goal 5: Efficient and Sustainable Operations

The human, fiscal and intellectual property of the CAA are deployed efficiently and effectively in alignment with the CAA's mandate, and the sustainability of the organization for its current and future members, for stakeholders and the public.

Fiscal Objectives:

5.1 The CAA's annual financial plan is based on a sustainable long-term financial plan.

5.1.1 [Core programs](#) are self-sustaining.

5.2 The CAA keeps a reserve fund sufficient for six months of operations, and a distinct Intellectual Property Development Fund adequate to meet the needs of the Industry Training Program and other Intellectual Property needs.

Organizational Objectives:

5.4 Staff, committees and board skills will keep pace with the demands of the organization.

5.5 Information technology services for web, customer relationship management, and networking are maintained, to contribute to organizational efficiency gains.

Goal 6: Products and Services

Where aligned with the CAA's mission, the CAA may deliver various products and services, or enter into collaborative efforts with other entities.

Objectives:

6.1 The CAA maintains and operates InfoEx software in an effective way for the InfoEx Community, employing a self-sustaining financial plan, fair subscriber contracts, and appropriate engagement of subscribers and the IT Committee.

6.2 New products and services are developed in partnership with government, industry and other stakeholders where appropriate to the CAA's mission and goals.

6.3 The CAA's brand is positively recognized across Canada and around the world as a result of the contributions from CAA Members. The brand is leveraged to support the CAA's mission, but will be protected when embarking on new products, services or partnerships.

Appendix - Terminology

This section describes:

- **Strategic Plan Terminology** that provides the structure for this plan;
- **Other Terminology** from the substance of plan used for brevity, but which may not be immediately clear to all readers of the plan

Strategic Plan Terminology

A strategic plan provides relatively high-level guidance to the functioning of an organization. At its highest level this plan states the CAA's vision and at the most detailed level the plan identifies annual objectives.

To understand this plan, it is important to distinguish between various strategic planning terms. These differences are more than semantic; they impact how the organization thinks and acts, ultimately determining how effective we will be.

Vision: A vision is intended to be aspirational, describing a desired future state that reflects the best or most desired conditions that the organization strives towards within its scope, but which have not yet been achieved or completely realized.

Mission (Purpose): A mission describes what the organization provides and to whom—essentially why the organization exists.

Values: Values are the organization's commitment to behave in a certain way, both as individuals and as an organization. Values are especially important when having to make tough choices or in challenging situations.

Goals: A goal is an end state, an outcome—but defined more specifically than the organization's mission/purpose or vision. Goals typically have a timeline of several years to accomplish, if not longer.

Objectives: An objective is a sub-component of a goal. It may have a shorter timeframe than the goal it supports (like a milestone). In other cases, it may more clearly define a required focus area to achieve the goal it supports.

Strategy: A strategy is the combination of linked activities that accomplish an objective or a goal. Strategies can be broken down into more narrow focus areas. In some cases there may be a number of separate strategies for a goal. It is not given that every objective will have its own strategy. Strategies may overlap two or more objectives.

Work plan: Work plans set forth a set of performance expectations to execute activities (chosen strategies) to achieve objectives or goals. Work plans should clearly express outputs and timelines, and who is responsible: board member, committee member or staff.

Other Terminology in this document

CAA Educational Programs

The CAA's Industry Training Program includes most of the CAA's educational offerings. However, Continuing Professional Development seminars during the CAA Spring meetings and other ad hoc workshops also form part of the CAA's Educational Programs.

Competency Profile

In 2015, the CAA developed two Competency Profiles to define Entry to Practice requirements for CAA members. The competencies for Practitioner 1 correspond to future requirements to become an Active Member. The competencies for Practitioner 2 correspond to future requirements to become a Professional Member. The Competency Profiles documents can be found in the [member's only section of the CAA website](#).

Entry to Practice Requirements

The CAA is working on new criteria for membership for Active and Professional members. Future members will need to meet these requirements to practice as CAA members. Hence the term *Entry to Practice Requirements*. Entry to practice requirement will ensure members joining the CAA as Active and Professional members are assessed to be able to perform the tasks outlined in the applicable competency profile to a specific level of proficiency.

Continuing Competency Program

After being admitted to a CAA membership class, a member must demonstrate his or her commitment to ongoing competency. The Continuing Competency Program is designed to provide that member with the tools to do so, along with the criteria by which the member's continued competency efforts can be assessed.

CAA Core Programs

CAA operations can be divided into ongoing core programs, and projects. Core programs include: The Industry Training Program, Association (services for CAA Members) and InfoEx. These core programs exist year after year, generate their own revenue and have their own expenses. Projects are specific initiatives outside of routine core operations. Projects are of varying length and financial requirements. If funds are required, these may come from external sources (fee-for-service contracts, grants, other sources) or internal resources such as the CAA's Intellectual Property Development Fund or other reserves.

Information technology

The CAA uses a several sophisticated software programs intended to support efficiency of operations. We use Microsoft's Great Plains to manage our financial controls. As CAA members visit our website they interact with the front end of a complex client-management system from Yourmembership.com. These services require diligence in their acquisition and execution. The CAA seeks to maximize efficiency through these and other IT services we purchase or license to provide CAA services.

Risk of Harm Analysis

(Adopted from Aaron Beardmore president's message – Avalanche Journal issue 107.)

There is a general societal expectation that common, highly specialized services requiring expertise will be regulated to avoid risks of harm to the public. In some practices, regulation comes in the form of government regulation (airline pilots for example), while in others such as professions (doctors, lawyers etc) a self-regulatory model is used. A Risk of Harm analysis identifies situations where, if a non-professional performs a service or activity the likely outcome greatly increases the risk of harm to persons, property or values. Risk of Harm generally arise from:

- Incompetence, lack of training or failure to meet commonly accepted practices
- Poor business practices and or poor record keeping
- Breaches of privacy
- Failure to follow ethical standards