



Avalanche Operations Level 1

Professional Avalanche Rescue Exam

Description for student

- You are a senior ski patroller at a ski area.
- You have two volunteer patrollers with you. They are each carrying a shovel, probe and transceiver, but have no previous training. They know how to assemble their gear and can follow directions but are otherwise untrained in avalanche rescue.
- The avalanche path is through the trees and the deposit area will be clearly marked by tracks and otherwise indicated to you (approximately 40 x 40 m).
- You will be met by a frantic person reporting an avalanche. Your instructor will be the reporting person/witness. You are familiar with the area, as you ski it often on your days off.
- You have whatever time you need to interview the witness, make any radio reports you wish, and direct your helpers (you may refer to a checklist, such as at the back of your field book).
- If you choose to contact your dispatch, your instructor will also act as dispatch, and can initiate any plans or responses you request.
- The timer starts *after* you have gathered information and made a plan. The timer starts when you initiate the search. The timer stops after you make your second probe strike AND have fully exposed one of the buried targets.
- Continue with the scenario after the second probe strike, and finish (or articulate) anything you think should still be done.

What the assessment is based on:

- Assesses hazard (hang-fire, overhead hazard, etc.). (At least articulates that they would look for residual hazard. They will be told that it is safe to enter the path)
- Asks good questions of the witness (e.g. last seen point, time of occurrence, number of people involved, whether they were wearing transceivers).
- Keeps the witness – care & control – does not ignore, has a plan for the witness
- Notifies Dispatch of incident details; requests appropriate back-up (rescue gear, first aid, dog, ambulance, helicopter, etc.)
- Effectively directs helpers to prepare to assist in rescue response (assemble probes, shovels, etc.)
- Has everyone, including witness, turn transceiver to Search
- Instructs helpers/witness where to go in the event of a second avalanche (safe area / egress)
- Initiates good search strategy. Calls out when they get a signal, distances, checks at 10 m & 3 m.
- Picks up surface clues, checks that no one is attached; put surface clues upright in snow
- Good Signal, Coarse, Fine, and Pinpoint search techniques
- Provides detailed directions to helpers on how to dig (conveyor digging), & extricate subject
- Ability to strategically eliminate terrain and find second subject without getting confused

Bonus Marks

- Discusses patient care
- Has a plan for additional resources when they arrive including where the heli lands
- Does a final sweep of path with transceiver to ensure no others are involved (clear the path)
- Ensures everyone goes back to SEND.