

GET TO KNOW, LEARN ABOUT SNOW

NO ONE EVER plans to get into trouble outdoors. But a turn in the weather, a mistake in judgment, equipment failure, sudden nightfall or an unexpected injury can change any recreational outing into a crisis.

How prepared are you for outdoor winter activities such as skiing, snowboarding or backcountry hiking? Before participating in any outdoor activity find out what you can do to be better prepared.

Safety precautions

- Check weather conditions and the avalanche bulletin
- Take an avalanche course.
- Leave word with a trustworthy person about your expected activity, who you are with, your starting point, route, destination and expected return time. Instruct them to contact the police immediately if you do not return as planned.
- Go with friends and cross difficult terrain one at a time.
- Obey all posted safety signs.
- Always set and stick to turnaround times, and adjust your pace to the slowest person in the group.

Physical preparedness

- Be sure your level of physical fitness can meet the demands of your proposed activity.

Gear and clothing

- Make sure all your gear is in good working condition.
- Ensure your gear is appropriate for your activity. For example, carry a beacon, probe, and collapsible shovel; and/or wear sturdy waterproof boots.
- Dress in layers and be ready for predicted — and unpredictable — weather conditions.

Other emergency items

- Map and compass.
- Large orange plastic bag to use as signalling device, emergency shelter, or rainwear.
- Flashlight and spare batteries.
- Extra food and water.
- Pocketknife.
- Waterproof matches, lighter or firestarter.
- First-aid kit.
- Whistle.
- Extra clothing.

To learn more about outdoor winter safety, check out the following websites:

Canadian Avalanche Association www.avalanche.bc.ca

AdventureSmart www.adventuresmart.ca/snow.php

Provincial Emergency Program www.pep.bc.ca