

AIARE Level II Decision Making in Avalanche Terrain

Avalanche Education Course

Detailed Course Information

Description:

Our season-long AIARE Level II course aims to provide students with the most hands-on experience possible, reshaping the model of avalanche education from a firehose to an extended mentorship. Through a model of tracking the entire season's snowpack, communicating with teammates, and making real-time backcountry decisions. We believe avalanche education should not exist in a bubble but rather be presented as the student would practice daily. Through three online Zoom sessions, five online classroom assignments and four field days, we will track weather systems, identify layers of concern, explore multiple backcountry ski zones in the White Mountains, and refine our decision-making skills.

- **Who's it for?** Advanced backcountry skiers and split boarders wishing to take their decision-making skills to the next level.
- **How we go?** Participants may take this course on backcountry Skis or Split board.
- **Where do we go?** We will utilize terrain on or near Mt. Washington and the northern Presidential Range.
- **Why go with AMG?** Acadia Mountain Guides is New England's original and most experienced AIARE provider. AIARE Course Leader Rob Benton will lead this course. Our curriculum meets and exceeds the AIARE Level II curriculum standard. The season-long course is the first of its kind to be offered on the East Coast, offering ample opportunities for continued learning and mentorship.
- **Pre-requisites:** Intermediate to advanced mountain travel skills on skis or a split board. Ability to safely ski ungroomed black diamond terrain. At least **one to two seasons of backcountry skiing** could also be defined as having completed at least 6 to 10 ski tours in avalanche terrain since completing your level I course.

The course will help you to gain confidence in:

Group leadership, tour planning, weather tracking, and communication

Beginning with an interactive online Zoom class session, we will review what you learned from your level I course and the decisions/learning moments throughout your backcountry skiing experience. We are introducing you to Google Classroom and will begin to prompt you with coursework. From there, we will form the foundation of habit and continue monitoring weather, snowpack changes, and observations. We will meet for field days in which we will actively make observations, learn the details of the instability test, and make decisions about what that means for our tour plan. This level II course aims to put you in the driver's seat of your season and hone your craft throughout a continued conversation about the snowpack in the presidential range. We will not limit our learnings to just the presidential range as we understand your goals and motives may take you to places near and far for skiing and riding. Expect hands-on learning, feedback, and lots of time driving your decision-making while leading the group.

Tuition

\$700.00 – includes AIARE LII Course Manual (PDF), AIARE Field Book, and no hidden fees.



Admiring ski turns made in the gulf of slides during the 24/25 season long level II.



Acadia Mountain Guides Climbing School

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AMGA & PCIA ACCREDITED CLIMBING SCHOOL

Course Schedule

Zoom Classroom		Field Days
Tuesday January 6 th	<u>ZOOM CLASS</u>	Thursday January 8 th
Tuesday February 3 rd	<u>ZOOM CLASS</u>	Thursday February 5 th
Tuesday February 24 th	<u>ZOOM CHECK-IN</u>	Thursday February 26 th
Tuesday March 3 rd	<u>ZOOM CLASS</u>	Thursday March 5 th

Sample Itinerary

Acadia Mountain Guides Level II Course in an extended format, including three Zoom classroom sessions, four field days, and one Zoom check-in. We aim to provide you with many touchpoints through your instructor's interactive Google Classroom activities, with a focus on ensuring that all of our field time is dedicated to moving in the mountains and making decisions as a team.

Sample Itinerary

- **Zoom Class (6:00 - 9:00 PM)**
- **Zoom Check-in (6:00 – 7:00 PM)**
- **Field Days (8:00 AM - 5:00 PM)**

About the American Institute of Avalanche Research and Education

AIARE courses are recognized nationwide and are consistent with international standards and recording methods. AIARE instructors participate in annual training and network continuously with each other to learn about the latest information in avalanche science. Courses flow sequentially regardless of where you take your class. AIARE courses teach you a way of thinking about snow travel rather than a protocol-based approach to learning. Save lives through education.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the AIARE Level II course, the student should be able to:

- Differentiate where specific avalanche hazards exist within the landscape and identify avalanche terrain where consequences may be more severe.
- Use and interpret weather, snow, and avalanche observations to locate appropriate terrain before entering and while in the field.
- Demonstrate leadership skills within a small team, including facilitating small group discussions, promoting appropriate terrain selection, and utilizing simple risk management strategies.
- Implement a basic forecasting framework that can be used with and without local supporting avalanche information.

Lodging and Food

Acadia Mountain Guides has partnered with [Quality Inn, Gorham, New Hampshire](#), to offer lodging. Quality Inn offers single/double occupancy rooms for \$99/night; an additional \$5/night will be charged for above double occupancy, and the room charge also includes continental breakfast.

Gorham offers several breakfast, lunch, and dinner options, all within walking distance of the classroom.

We encourage you to take advantage of this great deal!

Pre-Course Communication

Your instructor will provide more information about the course at least one week before the start of the course. They will provide additional information relevant to your learning experience.

Feel free to contact me Rob Benton @ robbenton.guide@gmail.com

Preparing for Your Course

Please complete the following as pre-course work and be prepared to discuss it in class.

Google Classroom

Please join the Google Classroom for your course. [Level II Google Classroom](#) Class code: 7rfycs4u

Case Studies:

- Please read the [Tunnel Creek Avalanche case](#) study.

Be prepared to chat about the given case studies:

- What went wrong? Could you see yourself making similar decisions? What may have changed the outcome?

Tour Planning:

- Tour planning is how you prepare to go into the backcountry.
- A tour plan is generated by using the avalanche bulletin, combined with maps (both hard copy and electronic versions) and a weather forecast to understand how the weather will influence your plan.
- It is easy to create reliable computer/phone-based tour plans to bring to the backcountry. You should always have a hard map and compass.
- Your tour plan should give you an idea of the vertical gain, the distance, compass bearings, run options, and areas to be careful of. Attached is a sample tour plan template.
 - Electronic tour planning is excellent, but you must also understand some basics. We will review tour planning basics in class but remember it is not a navigation class. Please bring a compass, ideally with a base plate. • We will be doing some sample tour planning during the course. It would be helpful if you were able to bring a laptop computer. We suggest downloading the following programs and apps that are helpful for digital mapping:

To your laptop: [Caltopo](#)

To your smartphone: the mapping apps onX Backcountry, Avenza, Caltopo, Gaia and the Windy app for

weather. *Tour planning resources:*

- <https://caltopo.com/map.html#l=38.8,-98.4&z=5&b=mbt>
- <https://www.google.com/earth/>
- <https://www.gaiagps.com/>
- <https://www.stockalpine.com/posts/google-earth-gaia-gps.html>
- <http://www.mountainschoolnews.com/2010/04/route-planning-how-to.html>

Inclusions

- AIARE Level II Student Manual
- AIARE field notebook
- AIARE Online Pre-Course Preparation
- Access to multiple guest speakers
- Membership to AMG AIARE Student/Instructor forum
- Acadia Mountain Guides avalanche decision-making field card.
- Ratio Maximum of 6 clients : 1 instructor
- All group emergency gear is provided.

Exclusions

- Personal gear (Including; beacon, probe, and shovel)
- Transportation to and from classroom/trailhead
- Trailhead parking fees if any
- Evening beverages / pub visits
- Lodging / meals
- Instructor / Guide gratuities

We strive to create the optimal snow and learning conditions for each course and to offer diverse venues for each field day.

If we travel to the west side of Mount Washington, a nominal parking fee may be charged at the Cog Railway base station parking area. Occasionally, we utilize lift access at nearby ski areas to access terrain, and this may require purchasing a single-ride lift pass.

Suggested Optional Texts

- **Staying Alive in Avalanche Terrain, 3rd Edition. Bruce Tremper**
 - This edition features a wholly new chapter in which Bruce pulls all the pieces together to create an organized, step-by-step system for making decisions off, and on, the mountain.
- **Avalanche Essentials: A Step-by-Step System for Safety & Survival, Bruce Tremper**
 - This is the companion to Staying Alive in Avalanche Terrain, the bestselling avalanche text in the U.S. - with easy-to-understand safety tips and checklists to help anyone stay safer. It is a small, take-along resource to reference in the field and assist decision-making. Winter athletes don't necessarily want to be snow scientists, but playing in an avalanche country requires basic knowledge of the risks of staying safe.
- **Thinking, Fast and Slow, Daniel Kahneman**
 - This book explores the ways we think and make decisions under pressure; we find it valuable as we are exploring the idea of leading a group or being an active part of decision-making in the backcountry.

Books may be ordered from Alpenglow [\(207\) 866-7562](tel:2078667562) or online at AlpenglowGear.com. at the time of your registration.

Meet your instructors!

Our courses are instructed by a team of professionals – all of whom have been vetted and approved through AIARE. Each course will have at least one instructor per six students. Occasionally we also have interns and guide assistants who have been through AIARE 1 and 2 courses and are there to provide additional assistance which allows us to get even more accomplished.

[Visit our team page to learn more about your instructors!](#)

Tipping your instructor

People often ask if it's appropriate to tip the instructor. Tipping is not expected, but it is always greatly appreciated. This is your course. The more you let your instructor know what your needs are, the more he or she can help you. If you don't understand, ask questions. If you have special interests, let your instructor know. If your instructor has provided you with a great experience and shared their knowledge and joy of the mountain world with you, a thank-you note or gratuity is always well received. If they have not, we would appreciate knowing about it.

What Gear Do You Need - Personal Equipment Checklist * = rental available

Participants receive a 20% discount on any avalanche-related purchases made between registration and seven days after the course (15% thereafter for a lifetime). Avalanche gear will be available for purchase at the course as well. (online at AlpenglowGear.com)

Ski Clothing: (your normal backcountry skiing kit w/ added insulation for standing around and learning)

- Softshell jacket
- Softshell pants
- 1 mid-weight base layer
- One light top or similar base layer
- Base layers
- Two pairs of ski socks
- Heavy gloves
- light gloves (soft shell, wind stopper)
- Ski hat/helmet
- Down coat/puffy/insulation layer
- Goggles
- Sunglasses
- Balaclava

Lunch Food, Snacks, and Drinks (as desired);

- Cliff bars/energy bars
- Jerky
- Mixed nuts
- Chocolate
- Hot chocolate/tea/coffee/etc.

In the field

- Touring skis, poles, boots, or split board.
- Probe, transceiver, shovel
- Skin wax glob stopper
- Skins
- Ski pack (30 L or bigger)
- Thermos
- Compass with baseplate
- Sunscreen/lip balm

Risk and Rescue

Enjoying the outdoors necessitates a certain degree of risk-taking. You are participating in this trip and entering the winter backcountry environment at your own risk. You are choosing to engage in an activity in which participants have been injured and killed. While such accidents are rare, they may occur at any time and be out of our control. Our guides draw upon solid guide education coupled with extensive experience to manage significant hazards inherent to mountain travel. Some of the hazards that can lead to injury or death associated with this trip include but are not limited to extreme weather, demanding physical travel, avalanche, vehicle transportation and falls or collisions while skiing or snowboarding. Please be sure that you are fully aware of such risks. It is our goal to interpret the environmental, situational and group variables and to make educated decisions to minimize dangers to you while at the same time providing an enjoyable and memorable experience.

Self-reliance in the face of adversity is expected on the part of the wilderness traveler entering the wilderness. Rescue is not automatic. For all practical purposes, our party is alone and must depend upon our own resources for self-rescue and be equipped for an extended emergency. Cellular phones and radios should not be relied upon in an emergency.

Finally, this is a group trip and good expedition behavior is critical. Participants are asked to stay with the group until everyone has safely exited the backcountry.

Medical and Rescue Concerns

No one starts out the day expecting to get hurt in the backcountry. However, despite all we know and all we do, accidents can still happen. At AMG, we take your medical care seriously. Like many guide services our leaders are trained as Wilderness First Responders, many are WEMTs. Additionally, all our regular employees participate in periodic medical skills review with our owner Jon who is a flight paramedic and lead instructor in wilderness medicine. Additionally on courses traveling to remote areas such as Katahdin, Chic Chocs or Mount Washington you can expect our guides to have pain and sedation medications available if needed.

Summit or Bust

The goals and objectives of this program are to learn avalanche skills. It is unlikely that we will pursue any summits during the course. Commonly we ascend into areas around Tuckerman Ravine, Gulf of Slide and ravines adjacent to the cog railway. We will make every reasonable effort to reach these areas, however, extreme weather, avalanche conditions, inadequate personal fitness, difficult terrain, or park weather / travel closures may make it impossible to achieve our desired terrain objectives.

Reservation and Payment

A 100% deposit is required for registration. Registration can be made on acadiamountainguides.com

Cancellation

When you book a course with Acadia Mountain Guides you are agreeing to our cancellation policy. Please realize that if your travel does not go according to plan in any way and for any reason, we are unable to provide credits or refunds outside of what is described below. We strongly recommend that you purchase trip insurance to protect your activity purchase against unforeseeable circumstances which include but are not limited to:

- Anticipation of Inclement Weather
- Flight and Travel Delays and Conditions
- Personal or work schedule changes
- Injury or Illness of self or family member

If you cancel more than 21 days in advance, you may put the deposit toward a future course or receive a refund of 50% of your deposit. Cancellations made within twenty-one (21) days of the program forfeit the full tuition rate. Alternatively, if you find a replacement, you will receive a 100% refund. A full refund will be given if Acadia Mountain Guides Climbing School must cancel the course.

Minimum Registration Requirements

A minimum of four (4) participants is needed to run this program and there is a maximum of six (6). The decision to run the program will be made three weeks prior to the start date. In the case of low registration, you will have the options of joining another trip, receiving a refund, or possibly paying an additional amount to allow the trip to run with low numbers.

Have a group?

Are you part of a college organization, ski club, etc.? We are happy to schedule a customized course for organizations, small groups, and individuals through New England and Eastern Canada. Of course, if you would like to schedule a course or trip in Iceland, Colorado, or Japan, etc. we would be very pleased to work with you.

Acadia Mountain Guides Difference

Acadia Mountain Guides Climbing School is certified through the American Mountain Guide Association and the Professional Climbing Instructor Association. Acadia Mountain Guides actively supports furthering their guide's development throughout their career. That means our guides are constantly taking steps to progress their skills and will provide you with an exceptional experience. AMG is also a proponent of helping clients reach their goals, whether it's having an epic day in the mountains or gaining skills to get into other terrain, Acadia Mountain Guides Climbing School can get you there!