



## AVALANCHE SKILLS TRAINING 2 • MOUNT WASHINGTON



Thank you for choosing Island Alpine Guides for your Avalanche Skills Training. This package contains important information to help you prepare, including a complete equipment list.

If you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to contact us by email at [info@islandalpineguides.com](mailto:info@islandalpineguides.com) or by phone on 250-400-2870.

We hope you find the course enjoyable and informative.

Jan Neuspiel  
Director/Guide  
Island Alpine Guides



## **AVALANCHE SKILLS TRAINING 2 • MOUNT WASHINGTON**

### **MEETING TIME & PLACE**

Courses are typically held at either the [Vancouver Island Mountain Centre](#) or the [Strathcona Park Wilderness Centre](#), both of which are near Mount Washington's Raven Lodge (the nordic lodge). We also sometimes use the IAG Directors home in Cumberland for our classroom. The meeting time is normally 8:30am on day one of the course. We will send out a group email in the week leading up to your course start date to confirm all the details.

### **COURSE OVERVIEW**

With support from the National Search and Rescue Secretariat's New Initiatives Fund, and the collaboration of the Canadian Ski Patrol System, the Alpine Club of Canada and others, the Canadian Avalanche Center (CAC) has designed the curriculum for Avalanche Skills Training Level 1 (AST1) and Avalanche Skills Training Level 2 (AST2, formerly known as Introductory and Advanced RAC training), and produced high-quality instructional materials, videos and reference books to promote effective learning progressions that emphasize important knowledge and skills. Avalanche Canada (formerly CAC) encourages and facilitates avalanche accident prevention in Canada by providing these training materials to numerous independent instructors who are Canadian Avalanche Association members in good standing. These individuals conduct AST programs as a small business or public service venture within their communities.

AST2 is an advanced avalanche course and is geared towards the recreationist who has taken a basic avalanche course in the past or an AST1. Individuals who are consistently venturing into avalanche terrain outside of ski area boundaries or into the backcountry, finding themselves in avalanche terrain and needing to make hazard-related decisions, are perfect candidates for this course. The curriculum developed by Avalanche Canada dictates a minimum of 8 hours of classroom time and 18 hours in the field. At Island Alpine Guides, our courses follow the curriculum set forth by Avalanche Canada and exceed all the minimum times required; a typical AST2 course will involve approximately 10 hours in the classroom and 21 hours in the field.

The following topics are covered on the AST2:

#### **Classroom sessions**

- Nature and formation of avalanches
- Avalanche terrain
- Mountain snowpack
- Winter backcountry travel



## AVALANCHE SKILLS TRAINING 2 • MOUNT WASHINGTON

- Assessing avalanche danger and decision-making
- Safety measures and self-rescue/avalanche transceivers
- Accident critiques & video

### Field sessions

- Terrain recognition
- Route finding
- Safe travel
- Stability evaluation
- Hazard recognition
- Small party self-rescue

### PREPARATION

Please come prepared for both the classroom and field sessions. The equipment list provided further down in this document will help you to be comfortable in the field regardless of the weather.

The choice to use skis or a splitboard is up to you. Choose what mode of transport you are most comfortable with. Splitboards are welcome on courses but please ensure you are familiar with how they work and the limitations of the equipment. Mostly, proficiency with the changeovers needs to be practised.

If you don't yet own your own touring gear but would like to use it for this course, [Ski Tak Hut](#) offers 25% off backcountry rentals (skins, boots, and skis or a splitboard) for all Island Alpine Guides customers while on one of our trips or courses. It's a great way to try it out before you commit. **The voucher with further instructions can be found at the end of this document.** If you are using any of the equipment for the first time, it's a good idea to practise changeovers (downhill to touring mode) before the course.

Ensure you bring along a warm jacket of down or synthetic material to keep you warm outside. There is a fair amount of standing around during the demo sessions. Extra gloves are a must as you are often digging around in the snow and your gloves will become soaking wet rapidly. A thermos of hot tea is a nice comfort.

For the classroom sessions, bring along the textbook and Avaluator from your AST1, as well as a notebook and pen. Rite In The Rain or similar waterproof books are very useful for taking notes in the field.



## AVALANCHE SKILLS TRAINING 2 • MOUNT WASHINGTON

### TYPICAL SCHEDULE

The course consists of four full days and three evening sessions. Exactly how that will play out is determined by course objectives and weather with the latter sometimes suggesting some flexibility in order to best achieve learning outcomes.

The four days will be very full with limited free time. Please keep your schedule free on the first three evenings as there is much theory to cover that is vital to completing the course.

A certificate is issued by email following completion of your course provided all sessions have been attended. This certificate is valid as the pre-requisite for the CAA Level 1 operations course.

### EQUIPMENT LIST

Items marked with “+” can be rented from us as an add-on at the time of registering. Items marked with “\*” are optional.

#### **Clothing**

- Synthetic, wool or silk thermal underwear top and bottom
- Wool, fleece or pile sweater or jacket
- Insulating pants of wool, fleece or pile
- Wind and waterproof jacket and pants
- Down or synthetic jacket for extra insulation on top
- Toque
- Mitts or glove, 2 pairs

#### **• Gear**

- Touring skis/splitboard
- Poles
- Boots
- Skins
- Transceiver (modern, digital 3-antenna)+
- Shovel+
- Probe+
- Compass\*
- Altimetre\*
- Toilet paper
- Personal small first aid kit (blister kit)
- SPF lip balm
- Sunscreen



## **AVALANCHE SKILLS TRAINING 2 • MOUNT WASHINGTON**

- Water bottle
- Lunches
- Thermos\*
- Sunglasses
- Ski goggles
- Backpack to carry everything on this list

Please be sure that all clothing and equipment is in good repair and functioning properly with boots fitted properly to bindings. Be sure that skins are fitted properly to skis or boards and that they stick properly. If you're bringing your own avalanche transceiver, be sure that it has fresh batteries in it. Malfunctioning equipment uses up precious learning time for all participants. Please come properly prepared.

### **GETTING TO MOUNT WASHINGTON**

Please be aware that the road to Mount Washington is a mountain road, which can be subject to serious winter driving conditions. Vehicles should have snow tires and carry chains in case they're required. Please note that our normal cancellation policy will apply for people that are unable to attend a course because they are unable to get up the road in their vehicle. For more information about getting to Mount Washington, please visit their [website](#).

### **RISKS, DANGERS, HAZARDS AND WAIVER**

All Island Alpine Guides courses and trips take place in an outdoor, wilderness environment. This means that as a participant you will be encountering various risks, dangers and hazards some of which include avalanches, cornices, crevasses, cliffs, trees, creeks, rockfall, difficult travel conditions, weather, illness, equipment failure, wild animals, becoming lost as well as the possibility of mistakes being made by IAG guides and instructors. To participate in these activities you will be required to read and agree to our [waiver](#) as part of the registration process. You will also be required to sign the waiver at the start of the course or trip. In doing so you will waive or give up certain legal rights including the right to sue or to claim compensation following an accident.

If you are a minor (under 19 years of age), we require your waiver to be signed by your parent or legal guardian. In this case, please download the appropriate waiver from the link above, print it, have your parent/guardian sign it, scan or photograph the completed copy and send it to [info@islandalpineguides.com](mailto:info@islandalpineguides.com). Minor students arriving without a waiver signed by their parent or legal guardian will not be allowed to participate in the course or trip.



## AVALANCHE SKILLS TRAINING 2 • MOUNT WASHINGTON

### **25% OFF VOUCHER FOR BACKCOUNTRY RENTALS AT SKI TAK HUT**

**This voucher is only valid for backcountry rentals being used *for an IAG course or trip.***

To get 25% off, you ***must*** bring the following with you to Ski Tak Hut when picking up your rentals:

- 1) A printed copy of this voucher
- 2) A printed copy of the Island Alpine Guides booking confirmation, which you received by email when you registered. This booking confirmation must show that you are renting the gear precisely for the dates that you are on an IAG course or trip.

**If you do not have the above two things with you when picking up the gear, you will *not* receive the 25% discount. No exceptions can be made.**