



Backcountry Rescue 101

Info Package

Introduction

A significant challenge of avalanche rescue is dealing with the issues that arise after the victims are extracted. Physical trauma, hypothermia, and how and where to get help are some challenges you may face. AST courses and traditional companion rescue courses teach you how to find and extract someone from under the snow. However, they rarely go in-depth with teaching you how to deal with injuries and the prospect of spending a night out in the field.

Kootenay Backcountry Guides has teamed up with Jill Weenink of Mountain Medical Consulting to create a course where we teach you valuable practical first aid skills and combine them with backcountry rescue skills. This course is a must for anyone looking for practical backcountry rescue skills.

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This package is loaded with important information to prepare you for your course. Please ensure you read and understand everything in this document. This document contains important information about:

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Certification:

- Wilderness First Aid - 16hr certification
- CPR-A Certification

Topics Covered

The best and most comprehensive course of its kind to offer relevant and realistic first-aid training for seasonal outdoor activities or short-term wilderness endeavors and pursuits. Wilderness First Aid is a two-and-a-half-day introduction to general medical concepts and basic life support skills. This course is designed for outdoor enthusiasts on day trips or short adventures.

- Thermoregulation
- Hypowraps
- Cold Injuries
- Medical Aspects of an Avalanche Rescue
- Musculoskeletal injuries
- Deadly Bleeds
- Respiratory Emergencies
- Anaphylaxis

In addition to the first aid component of this course, you will learn:

- What to expect from SAR crews who respond to your call for help
- The best ways to communicate to outside resources
- What to expect and how to respond after you dig an injured person out of an avalanche.
- How and when to use improvised rescue systems to transport injured people over the snow.
- Shelter and thermoregulation strategies for staying overnight.

Schedule - Meeting Times + Location

Day One:

- 5:00 pm - Nelson Visitor Center Upstairs
- It will take place in our classroom, reviewing first aid assessment and theory. You need to bring the touring equipment you carry in your backpack.

Day Two:

- 8:00 am - Nelson Visitor Center Upstairs
- We will run plenty of scenarios to give you a baseline for first aid. In addition, we will be practicing skills in the classroom and outdoors.

Day Three

- 8:00 am - Nelson Visitor Center Parking Lot
- We will apply classroom training in the field. We will tour the backcountry for a day of first aid and backcountry rescue skills practice. Snowshoes or ski equipment are appropriate.

Equipment List

Having the proper gear will allow you to maximize your learning on this course. Please follow this list to make sure that you have all of the proper equipment. We understand that some of this equipment may be new to you. Please reach out to us if you have any questions.

Your Preferred Methods of Travel:

Alpine Touring Bindings: These are downhill skis with a touring binding. Bindings come in a couple of styles:

1. **Tech bindings.** This binding has pins that connect with holes in the toe of your boots. You need to have Tech Toe boots for these bindings to work. See [this image](#) for an idea of what we are describing. If you want a lightweight tech binding, the [Dynafit Radical](#) is a great example. The [Marker KingPin](#) is a decent choice that combines a regular releasable heel with a tech style toe piece. There are many options available for different tech bindings and boot combinations. One challenge with tech bindings is that they do not adhere to the DIN system and can be hard to operate. The [Solomon Shift](#) binding has tried to deal with the DIN issue by making a regular binding that turns into a tech binding for climbing. There are others coming on the market that do the same.
2. **Frame Bindings.** This is where there is a regular toe and heel piece but the heel can unlock. See [this image](#) for details. One challenge with frame bindings is that they are heavy. We do not recommend heavy frame bindings like the Marker Duke. These bindings are designed for very short tours of less than 45min in duration. We have seen many people unable to finish their days because they have heavy bindings.

Telemark skis: These are becoming less and less popular as the world of alpine ski touring equipment has changed with innovation. This system can be challenging. Releasable bindings are highly recommended as this is a major safety advantage.

Boots: Those who choose Alpine Touring will want to have Alpine Touring Boots with Vibram Soles. Please make sure that if you have a tech binding, you buy boots with a tech toe. See the **(Alpine Touring skis/bindings section for details)**. Alpine Touring boots are designed for walking and skiing. They have a walk mode that allows your ankle to flex and a rockered sole for easy walking. Downhill Alpine boots are not recommended, even ones with a walk mode, these boots are significantly heavier and less comfortable than an Alpine Touring boot. We have seen many people unable to finish their days because they bring heavy boots.

Backpack: Having a properly fitting backpack is crucial to having a comfortable day in the backcountry. We recommend a pack between 30 and 45L. The best packs have compartments for your avalanche safety gear. Having a helmet holder is also important.

Avalanche Safety Equipment:

Although we might not travel into avalanche terrain, it is still important to have all the necessary avalanche safety gear. Practicing crevasse rescue with all of the gear you will have with you is important.

Transceivers: You need to have a modern triple antenna digital transceiver, we do not allow analogue or dual antenna transceivers on our trips or courses. All new modern triple antenna transceivers are good. Select one that you think fits your needs. **You should be very wary of purchasing transceivers on Facebook Marketplace or from other used gear sources. You do not know how that transceiver has been treated or how old it is.**

See [this video](#) for an overview of what to look for in transceivers.

If you are looking for a good site to check out all the different transceivers and what features are available, Go to <https://beaconreviews.com/>

Please note that if you have a Pieps DSP Sport or Pro, these transceivers have issues with their lock buttons. Please take them to your local gear shop to get them checked out.

What model is your beacon?

Your beacon should have the model name printed somewhere on the body.

Below are examples of the most common PIEPS and Black Diamond Equipment beacon models on the market today:



Shovel: Shops offer a wide range of excellent shovels. Do not buy plastic or super lightweight shovels. Check out [this video](#) for what to look for in a shovel.

Probe: Make sure you are buying a high-quality probe that is easy to put together.

See [this video](#) for what to look for in a probe. All new models have a quick snap to lock the probe in place; we do not recommend screw in tops for avalanche probes. BCA makes great probes at a reasonable price. We recommend that your probe is 300cm or longer.

Skins: Choose a skin that is appropriate for your skis or splitboard. Make sure to follow the instructions carefully when setting them up. G3 Alpinist Skins are a really great easy skin to set up, they make them for both skis and splitboards.

Airbag Packs: Avalanche airbags are **not** mandatory on our courses or trips. European studies show they significantly reduce your chances of being buried in an avalanche. There are many different makes and models to choose from and range from \$700 to \$1800. These can be rented from [Roam Shop](#) in Nelson B.C.

Backcountry Rescue Course Equipment List:

- Bring any rescue equipment you travel with in the backcountry.
- Bring any communication systems you use, radios, inreaches, etc.
- 2, 5 meter long lengths of 5-7 mm cordelette
- **Rescue Tarp**

- Optional: A [sil tarp](#) or professional level [rescue toboggan](#) is a necessary piece of equipment every group should have in the backcountry. You can view reviews of different rescue tarp [systems here](#).
- Roam and Valhalla Pure carries Sil Tarps. We will have some to practice with on the course. If you can't find one or want to wait until after the course to buy one, then hold off. If you have a system that you carry around, bring that and we will do our best test it out.
- We will be showing you a system you can use with a cheap \$10, 8 x 10 ft tarp you can buy at Home Hardware. Feel free to wait until you complete the course to see what system you wish to use.
- Small personal First Aid Kit (available at Roam or Valhalla Pure) We will cover essentials in class as well.
- [SAM Splint](#) (optional)
- Ski Straps (Great for splinting)

Outerwear:

- High quality waterproof breathable shell and pants.
- Warm toque.
- Ski boots or snowboard boots.
- Helmet, which should be lightweight for carrying
- 2 pair of water-resistant gloves or mitts
- High-quality ski or snowboard socks
- Long underwear top and bottom
- A warm puffy Thinsulate or down jacket
- Goggles and sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Lunch and snacks
- A thermos of tea or coffee
- A high-quality camera (optional)
- Your phone
- Headlamp

If you have any questions or need some clarification you can reach us at:

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