



# Alpine Rescue Team

Experience - Commitment - Safety

## Avalanche Awareness

### Fact # 1

Someone completely buried in an avalanche has a 90% chance of survival if they're uncovered within the first 15 minutes (absent any life threatening trauma-related injuries); someone buried 30 minutes has approximately a 50% chance of survival. The chances of survival drop dramatically after 30 minutes, but some avalanche victims do survive for many hours under the snow.

### Fact # 2

Very few people, caught in an avalanche, have been able to dig themselves out. For someone completely buried, their best chance for survival depends on the quick actions of their companions. For companion rescue the essential gear for those traveling in avalanche terrain includes avalanche beacons, probes, and shovels, and the ability to use them properly. Winter recreationalists should also be equipped with RECCO reflectors, which may help organized rescue teams find people faster. Alpine Rescue Team uses the RECCO® Rescue System.

- Most avalanches CAN be avoided.
- Most avalanches, involving a victim, are started by that person or a companion.
- Most avalanches occur on slopes of 30-to-45 degrees, during or following a major storm.
- Most avalanche victims have some avalanche training and consider themselves skilled in their sport.
- More avalanche fatalities occur in Colorado than any other state (averaging 6 per year)
- Approximately 1/3 of all of the nation's avalanche deaths have occurred in Colorado.

The local county sheriff is responsible for and coordinates ALL backcountry emergency responses including (non ski-area) avalanches.

The Colorado Avalanche Information Center provides daily weather and avalanche condition updates: 303.275.5360 or <http://avalanche.state.co.us>.

Major storms with new snow and/or strong winds can quickly increase the backcountry avalanche danger. In Colorado be alert to storms producing snowfall rates of 1-inch per hour or greater, or 10-inches or greater in 24 hours. Even when no snow is falling Colorado's strong winds frequently cause blowing snow that can drift quickly into avalanche starting zones causing the danger to rise dramatically, even in as little as one hour.

"If my partner's caught in a slide, should I immediately go for help?"

NO! You are your friend's BEST chance for survival. If you suspect your friend is buried, attempt calling 9-1-1, then do everything possible to locate your friend.

The Sheriff and Alpine Rescue Team prefer to be called and not needed, than called too late. To postpone a call for help could cost a life.

**Saving Lives Through Rescue and Mountain Safety Education We're Ready, 24/7**

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