



Feb. 24, 2009
PR# 09-025

DPS Sponsors Free Avalanche Awareness Courses

(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) - We are now in Alaska's avalanche season. To better prepare Alaskans for outdoor recreation this time of year, the Department of Public Safety is sponsoring a series of free avalanche awareness courses, contracted through Alaska Avalanche School. Attendees will learn avalanche survival tips: How to recognize an avalanche zone, what to do if you are caught in an avalanche, what equipment you should carry, etc.

Knowing some basic facts about avalanches could save your life:

- The vast majority of avalanches involving injuries or fatalities are triggered by people snowmachining, snowboarding or skiing.
- Dry slab avalanches typically travel 60-80 miles per hour. They reach these speeds within about 5 seconds after they fracture. Wet avalanches usually travel much slower — around 20 miles per hour.
- Natural avalanches occur because new or windblown snow overloads weak-layers or because of rapid warming, but there's almost always obvious signs of instability by the time avalanches come down on their own.

There are two types of courses offered through the grant program. Below is a brief description of each:

AVALANCHE AWARENESS PRESENTATION: Backcountry Travelers! Join the Alaska Avalanche School and take a step towards avalanche safety education. This will be a 4 hour lecture covering terrain awareness, avoidance, route finding, and more. This program is free to the public, made possible through a grant from the Department of Public Safety. Registration is not required.

AVALANCHE FIELD WORKSHOP: Get into the snow with the Alaska Avalanche School! This is a 4 hour outdoor workshop. Topics to be covered include important avalanche backcountry skills such as beacon use, terrain analysis, probing, and rescue scenarios. This program is free to the public, and is made possible through a grant from the Department of Public Safety. **Registration is required and space is limited.**

For more information on the courses and to enroll, please call the Alaska Avalanche School at 907-345-0878. Or, send an email to: alaskaavalanche@mac.com

Course Dates and Locations:

February 28, 2009

Avalanche Awareness Presentation

Seward, Alaska at the High School Auditorium from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

February 28, 2009

Avalanche Field Workshop

Seward, Alaska at the High School fields from 1:30 pm to 5:30 pm

February 28, 2009

Avalanche Awareness Presentation

Talkeetna, Alaska at the National Park Service Ranger Station from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

March 1, 2009

Avalanche Field Workshop

Talkeetna, Alaska at the end of Main Street by the Susitna River from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

March 7, 2009

Avalanche Awareness Presentation

Fairbanks, Alaska at the Schiabile Auditorium on the UAF Campus from 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm

March 8, 2009

Avalanche Field Workshop

Fairbanks, Alaska at the UAF Ski Hut from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

March 14, 2009

Avalanche Awareness Presentation

Sitka, Alaska at the Centennial Hall from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm

March 14, 2009

Avalanche Field Workshop

Sitka, Alaska at the Centennial Hall from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

March 21, 2009

Avalanche Awareness Presentation

Girdwood, Alaska at the Community Center from 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm

March 22, 2009

Avalanche Field Workshop

Girdwood, Alaska from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

April 11, 2009

Avalanche Awareness Presentation

Glennallen, Alaska at the High School from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

April 11, 2009

Avalanche Field Workshop

Glennallen, Alaska at the High School from 1:30 pm to 5:30 pm

To check for any schedule changes, go <http://www.alaskaavalanche.com/Site/Homepage.html>