



AST PR# 11-001
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Avalanche Danger High Due to Unseasonably Warm Weather

(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) – Avalanche Specialists in Southcentral Alaska and the Juneau area are cautioning the public about increased avalanche danger in mountainous areas. Turnagain Pass, Valdez, Cordova and the city of Juneau have been classified as moderate, high or considerable for avalanche danger.

Jon Gelling, an avalanche forecaster with Chugach National Forest Avalanche Information Center ([CNFAIC](#)), says the stress on an unstable snow layer one to three feet below the surface is immense and it won't take much for a large avalanche to tumble down and potentially take lives of people in its path.

The Department of Public Safety, along with Avalanche Specialists, wants to encourage outdoor enthusiasts to take a break from recreating in the backcountry. The current avalanche danger is such that the avalanche forecasters will not even perform their normal field work.

Gelling advises that the conditions won't improve until at least 24 hours after the current storm cycle. However, danger pockets will still persist. According to the CNFAIC, Avalanche danger can change daily. It is strongly advised that recreationists check Avalanche advisories prior to setting out on excursions.

Before heading out into the backcountry for snowmachining, skiing or snowshoeing, AST encourages that you file a [trip plan](#) with detailed information regarding where you will be traveling and what time you will return. Give your trip plan to someone who will call to report you missing if you do not check in or return on time.

Also, AST encourages outdoor enthusiasts to have provisions and safety gear with them, to be aware of the conditions in the area, and to travel in groups. The minimum recommended safety gear includes cell phone and communication equipment, avalanche transceivers, probes and shovels.

A Wilderness trip plan form can be found online at:
<http://www.dps.state.ak.us/pio/docs/WildernessTripPlan.pdf>

To view the avalanche forecast around the state, visit the below websites:

<http://www.cnfaic.org/>
<http://www.avalanche-center.org/Bulletins/>
<http://www.avalanche.org/>
<http://www.alaskasnow.org/>
<http://www.juneau.org/avalanche/>