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Avalanche Awareness: Are You Prepared?

(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) – With temperatures warming in Southcentral Alaska, the Department of Public Safety would like to remind outdoor enthusiasts that the danger of Avalanches this time of year is a very real threat.

The North American Outdoor Institute provides free avalanche awareness classes in different locations throughout the state. The training is made possible by funds provided through the Department of Public Safety. You can check for training dates and locations, as well as register for classes, on the NOAI website at <http://naoiak.org/cal-events.php>.

Steep slopes, heavy wet snow and relatively warm temperatures combine every year to create conditions that are conducive to avalanches, especially January through March. This year will be no different due to the recent heavy snowfall coupled with warmer weather. While avalanches are naturally occurring, most avalanches that either entrap or kill people are triggered by the people out recreating on the slopes.

Before heading out in the backcountry on your snowshoes, skis or snowmachines take a few crucial safety precautions:

Check the current avalanche conditions and weather forecasts as they can change daily:

- Chugach National Forest Avalanche Information Center— <http://www.cnfaic.org/>
- Avalanche Center— <http://www.avalanche-center.org/Bulletins/>
- American Avalanche Association— <http://www.avalanche.org/>
- Alaska Avalanche Information Center— <http://www.alaskasnow.org/>
- City/Borough of Juneau Urban Avalanche Advisory— <http://www.juneau.org/avalanche/>
- National Weather Service for the Alaska Region— <http://www.arh.noaa.gov/>

Leave a trip Plan: Make sure you leave detailed information regarding the location you are traveling, who you are with, planned activity, brief description of your gear (color, quantity, etc.) and planned return time.

Make sure you are properly equipped: At the very least have weather-appropriate clothing and carry avalanche beacons, shovels, probes and communication devices. Also make sure you know how to use the equipment you have with you. Don't forget to test every person's beacons in your group before embarking into the backcountry.

For more information on Avalanche Safety, click [HERE](#).