



# THE PLAN

A SIMPLE WAY TO  
IMPROVE YOUR SAFETY



# THE PLAN

## A SIMPLE WAY TO HELP

This booklet provides some basic information to help you recognize mountain dangers and handle trouble when it strikes.

There is no replacement for education, experience, and good judgment. RECCO reminds you the best rescue is one that need not happen because an accident was prevented by knowledge and preparation.

When visiting the mountains be sure your skills and knowledge match your ambitions. When in doubt stay inbounds, wait for another time, travel with more experienced people, or hire a professional guide.

Think not only of yourself but of those you might leave behind.

## DANGERS

When you ride off-piste, leave a ski resort, or travel into the backcountry, natural and human-caused dangers abound. You can face avalanches, cliffs, crevasses, tree wells, shallow snow, creek beds, and even hidden mineshafts. A wrong turn, poor visibility, a sudden a snowstorm, blowing snow, or fog can quickly disorient you. A slight injury or an equipment problem can cause significant delay. Fatigue, or worse, exhaustion, when combined with cold, wet mountain weather can quickly turn minor troubles into life-threatening emergencies.

Remember, fun in the mountains can involve taking risks, and taking risks should be balanced with good judgment.

## AVALANCHES

Avalanches can be one of the most deadly dangers; however, avalanche accidents may also be the easiest to prevent because most avalanche victims or a companion triggers the avalanche that catches them.

Staying safe and having fun requires knowing what to look for – Red Flags – and traveling prepared for trouble. Being prepared also means having a plan and knowing how to effect a rescue if trouble finds you.

This booklet will help you stay safe and have fun. We hope it will also motivate you to learn more about being safe in the mountains and to take an avalanche course.

## RED FLAGS

Just because the snow looks great or has tracks, does not mean conditions are safe. Here are some signs to avalanche dangers:

### AVALANCHE DANGERS

Most avalanches and avalanche accidents occur during or within days of a storm.

Recent avalanches show similar slopes can be dangerous. Significant new snow loads slopes and needs time to settle.

Blowing snow drifts snow into avalanche starting zones.

Cracks shooting out from underfoot and/or “whumpfing,” (collapsing) snow, or hollow drum-like sounds indicate unstable snow and dangerous conditions.

Wet snow caused by thaw can quickly become unstable. If you encounter any of these clues, you should stay on less-steep terrain.

### TERRAIN DANGERS

Avalanches occur most frequently on slopes of 30–45 degrees in steepness.

Terrain traps are gullies, ravines, crevasses, cliffs, trees, creek beds, etc., all places where even a small avalanche has serious consequences.

Cornices (overhanging snow) can break unexpectedly under your weight.

## WEATHER DANGERS

Storms and/or strong winds increase avalanche danger and can quickly cause poor visibility.

New snow and/or rain can make for much slower and more difficult travel conditions.

Cold and wet are a dangerous combination.

## PERSONAL DANGERS — TO AVOID THESE DANGERS:

Ride with a partner. Keep in sight of one another.

Be equipped with and know how to use rescue equipment.

Be prepared for the conditions.

Speak out when unsure about conditions.

Have a plan.

Accidents can happen to the best, but having a PLAN before you go greatly improves your chances when trouble strikes. THE PLAN offers some simple tips.

## THE PLAN

### BE INFORMED

Mountain Weather and Avalanche Information

Europe [www.lawinen.org](http://www.lawinen.org)

North America [www.avalanche.org](http://www.avalanche.org)

New Zealand [www.avalanche.net.nz](http://www.avalanche.net.nz)

South America [www.clubandino.org](http://www.clubandino.org)

Japan [www.actjapan.org](http://www.actjapan.org)

## **INFORM OTHERS**

- Where you are going.
- When you will be back.
- Who you will be with.
- What color your jacket is.

## **WHETHER GOING OFF-PISTE OR FAR INTO THE BACKCOUNTRY, BE PREPARED TO:**

- Find your way.
- Keep yourself warm and dry.
- Fuel your efforts.
- Notify rescuers.
- Find a friend
- Care for an injured friend.
- Attract rescuers.
- Have fun!

## **BE EQUIPPED**

- Transceiver.
- Probe pole.
- Shovel.
- RECCO reflectors.
- First-aid kit.
- Cell phone.

## WHEN TROUBLE STRIKES

### Alert rescuers

Europe	112
North America	911
Asia	119
New Zealand	111

### Be ready to tell:

- What happened.
- How many casualties.
- Where you are.
- What assistance you need.

### Be ready to:

- Listen for instructions.

## HELICOPTER SIGNALS

### If a rescue helicopter comes to your aid:

- Secure all loose items so they do not blow away.
- Wait for the rescuer to come to you.

### Ground to Air hand signals:



Yes – Rescue Needed



No – Rescue Not Needed



# AVALANCHE RESCUE

## SELF RESCUE

Yell out, then clamp your mouth closed.

Try to escape to the side, or grab a tree or rock.

If you are knocked down, get rid of your poles and skis.

Fight the avalanche to stay on top, try rolling to the side.

Get your hands in front of your face to create an air pocket.

If buried, try thrusting up a hand or foot to the surface.

## COMPANION RESCUE

Watch your friend closely to establish a last seen area.

Alert rescue services by mobile phone but do not go for help prematurely. Stay and search for as long as possible.

Mark the spot where you last saw your friend and search down slope from this spot.

Use your beacon and watch and listen for clues.

If no beacons, probe likely burial areas.

Quickly and carefully dig out your friend. Be ready to care for their injuries and to protect them from the environment.

## ORGANIZED RESCUE

An avalanche burial is a medical emergency, and the sooner organized rescue teams are notified, the sooner they can respond. Rescuers prefer to be called and not needed, than to be needed but called too late.

## ABOUT RECCO

The RECCO System allows organized rescue teams to search faster and provides skiers and snowboarders with one more chance to be found in time.

The RECCO System's advanced rescue technology enables fast searching and directional pinpointing of a victim's precise location using harmonic radar.

The two-part system consists of a RECCO detector used by organized rescue teams, and RECCO reflectors that are integrated into apparel, helmets, body protection, and boots.

RECCO reflectors do not replace the avalanche rescue transceiver nor is it intended for companion rescue.

The RECCO System is a simple, basic, and inexpensive rescue system when you need more help than your companions can provide.

Venturing out? Look for products equipped with the RECCO Advanced Rescue System.

## THOSE WHO KNOW, CHOOSE RECCO!

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# INTERNATIONAL AVALANCHE DANGER LEVEL



## 5. EXTREME

Avoid all avalanche terrain.



## 4. HIGH

Very dangerous avalanche conditions. Travel in avalanche terrain NOT recommended.



## 3. CONSIDERABLE

Dangerous avalanche conditions. Careful snowpack evaluation, cautious routefinding and conservative decision-making essential.



## 2. MODERATE

Heightened avalanche conditions on specific terrain features. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully; identify features of concern.



## 1. LOW

Generally safe avalanche conditions. Watch for unstable snow on isolated terrain features.

**ADVANCED RESCUE TECHNOLOGY**

THIS LOCATION TECHNOLOGY IS NOT  
A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE TRANSCEIVER  
**RECCO.COM**

