



# BACKCOUNTRY AVALANCHE COURSE



**2021 COURSE NOTES**





# BACKCOUNTRY AVALANCHE COURSE

## 2021 COURSE DETAILS

**Dates:** BAC 1: July 8–11  
BAC 2: July 22–25  
BAC 3: August 5–8  
BAC 4: August 19–22

**Duration:** 4 days

**Departure:** ex Wanaka, New Zealand

**Price:** NZ\$1,425 each  
1:4 guide to climber ratio

▲ Open yourself up to the grandeur of the backcountry safely. Photo: Suze Kelly

Welcome to Adventure Consultants' Backcountry Avalanche Course. Our 4-day New Zealand Mountain Safety Council accredited course is designed to provide you with up-to-date techniques and decision making skills for touring in New Zealand's vast backcountry. It is directed toward fit and motivated people who have had a taste of the backcountry and wish to extend their avalanche knowledge further and explore more terrain safely.

This is a New Zealand Mountain Safety Council (MSC) accredited course and attendees attain the MSC Recreational Avalanche Course Certificate.

This course is designed to boost your riding to the next level and expand your knowledge and confidence when stepping away from the ski field crowds, all whilst obtaining a qualification!

We take you out into the backcountry every day during this MSC accredited Backcountry Avalanche Course, so you can learn from a professional guide how to make good decisions when you are touring in the mountains.

We enjoy rapid entry into the backcountry from our base in Wanaka, taking ourselves directly into perfect terrain for developing safe practices, which we complement with interesting indoor sessions.

Your highly-experienced and qualified guide will introduce new skills and enhance your existing knowledge, covering snow profiles, weather and terrain analysis, avalanche rescue and much more.

## SKILLS COVERED

The following is an outline of skills taught during the course:

- Weather assessment
- Snowpack assessment
- Understanding avalanche equipment
- Rescue techniques
- Navigation and safe route selection

**NOTE:** Factors such as weather and snow conditions may dictate that not all topics are covered in full.



▲ Understanding the snowpack is a crucial backcountry skill. Photo: Dean Staples



▲ Learn in a friendly environment with like-minded people. Photo: Liz Mathieson



▲ Cutting tracks outside the Cardrona ski resort. Photo: Adrian Camm

## MSC QUALIFICATION

### *Mountain Safety Council Recreational Avalanche Course Certificate:*

This course builds on the basics taught during the introductory level Avalanche Awareness Course. It is designed to provide a deeper level of insight into route selection, decision making, rescue skills and the combining factors of weather and terrain on avalanche risk.

## OUR GUIDES

The instructors on our Backcountry Avalanche Courses are NZMGA/IFMGA qualified guides with many years' experience, not only in pursuing their own climbing and backcountry skiing careers, but also in learning how to pass these skills on in an environment which is conducive to accelerated learning.

Success with the highest margin of care is always a hallmark of our approach; promoting the realisation that even extreme pursuits such as high-altitude mountaineering can be undertaken safely.

A founding principle at Adventure Consultants is to recognise the necessity of positive communication

within the group to foster an open and friendly approach to communicating and reinforcing learning processes.

Adventure Consultants employs only NZMGA or IFMGA qualified guides; the most advanced training and certification program internationally. To gain these qualifications guides must undergo rigorous training and assessment on instruction, avalanche training, wilderness first aid, rescue training and much more. The qualification takes around five years to attain and ensures you are getting a world-class professional service.

## TYPICAL COURSE OUTLINE

Your Backcountry Avalanche Course begins at 9.00am on Day 1 at the Adventure Consultants Office in Wanaka.

Following morning introductions, your guide will present the course syllabus, outlining how the course will operate. Equipment relevant to the trip will be discussed and your guides will be able to provide you with any advice you need. Rental equipment will be fitted at this time and final purchases can be made.



▲ Learn essential avalanche rescue techniques. Photo: Camilla Rutherford

Once we are all set up for the day, we will drive up to one of the three popular ski fields in the local area to begin a day of training in real snow conditions. This course spends as much time as possible outside of the classroom in order to develop your skills in a real-world environment. This allows you to fully grasp the practical applications of the teachings, rather than just acquiring a theoretical base.

After a full day of instruction on snowpack interpretation and effective use of avalanche equipment, we will return to the AC office in the afternoon for a debrief and consolidation of the day's learnings. It's then time to disperse to our respective Wanaka lodgings for the evening and a good night's rest before reconvening again the following morning.

Each day, the course will follow a similar pattern as we head out on a day trip to the snow and each night return to town for a sound night's sleep. As we advance through the curriculum, your guides will progressively introduce a wider range of skills and techniques to broaden your knowledge and skills base.

The course includes the transceiver competency test and upon completion of the course you will receive an MSC Backcountry Avalanche Certificate.

Please note that weather plays a major factor in any mountain experience and the New Zealand's Southern Alps get their share. We intend to run the course according to schedule however as we at the whim of the weather we often have to adjust our program accordingly.

## COURSE DATES 2021

Dates: Winter/Spring 2021

**BAC 1:** July 8–11

**BAC 2:** July 22–25

**BAC 3:** August 5–8

**BAC 4:** August 19–22

If these scheduled courses don't suit your availability, you can also choose your own dates for a private Backcountry Avalanche Course. Please contact our office for details and guide availability.

## CLASS SIZE

Each course will run with a minimum of 4 students and 1 guide and a maximum of 5 students and 1 guide.

## EQUIPMENT

Skiing in the New Zealand mountains requires good personal gear due to the potential cold weather conditions. Our focus is on having the essential clothing and equipment whilst keeping packs as light as possible for your comfort and ease of travel.

Upon sign up, we will send out a comprehensive equipment list and your guide will go through this with you prior to the trip. All group equipment will be organised by your guide and we carry a good range of modern rental equipment for your personal needs. If you would like to rent from us, please advise your requirements in advance to ensure correct sizing and availability.



▲ Learn the intricacies of snow profiles. Photo: Suze Kelly

We have snowshoes available for rent for snowboarders or, better yet, we can help you rent a splitboard and climbing skins. For skiers, we can help you rent specialised touring skis, boots and climbing skins.

If you intend to buy equipment items, we are happy to advise on suitable brands and models. We offer our clients discounted prices on a selection of skiing gear, avalanche rescue equipment and mountain clothing, and can arrange for it to be available upon your arrival.

## WEATHER

Weather is an integral facet of any mountain range and getting to understand and work with this major environmental factor is what will distinguish you from the others. The New Zealand weather can be fierce but also benign. A skier/rider who learns to optimise their opportunities here will have the skills to ski and ride in many other mountain environments on Earth.

Our backcountry skiing and snowboarding season runs from August through to November. Our experience with New Zealand weather shows that August has more stable weather conditions.

There are approximately 9 daylight hours in winter. Temperatures will drop to as low as  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$  and could rise to as high as  $15^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

On your course, it is probable that at some stage, adverse weather may affect our touring plans. However, we will attempt to anticipate what best moves to make for the positive outcome of the course.

## COMMUNICATION & MESSAGES

Our guides are in radio/cell/satellite phone communication with our operations base and Department of Conservation headquarters throughout the trip. This assists us with scheduling, weather forecast updates and safety back up. Urgent messages can be relayed via our office to the field if required. Each course travelling into remote regions carries a locator beacon for additional security.

## FITNESS & HEALTH

To make the most of your experience, we encourage you to work on your fitness prior to the trip. You need to be a strong intermediate skier or snowboarder to get the most out of the course. Your guide places special focus on fitness levels and will regulate the pace accordingly.

Our registration form requests that you advise us of any medical problems you may have and of any medications you are taking. Any information you supply will be treated as confidential.

## FOOD

Please bring your lunch each day, along with a good supply of your favourite snack food to keep you sustained throughout the day.

## INSURANCE

We strongly recommend that you take out trip cancellation and travel insurance to cover any injury or mishap that occurs prior to or whilst on your trip.



▲ Learn the skills to make safe navigation decisions. Photo: Suze Kelly



▲Discover a whole new world of untracked powder with your newly acquired avalanche competence. Photo: Adrian Camm

Whilst our focus is on safety and our track record supports this, the mountains do have hazards and there is always the potential for mishap. Should you be injured on the trip, the New Zealand Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) would pay rescue costs, however, you may not be eligible for bulk compensation payments. You are responsible for any costs beyond the cover provided by ACC.

## TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION

We commence the Backcountry Avalanche Course from our base in Wanaka. Air New Zealand and Qantas/Jetstar provide daily services for flights from Christchurch, Auckland and Wellington to Queenstown. There are also direct international flights from most major Australian cities to Queenstown.

A shuttle service operates several times daily between Queenstown and Wanaka (approximately one hour driving time and at NZ\$35 each way). Check <https://www.ritchies.co.nz/wanaka> for details. Bus services operate daily between Christchurch and Wanaka (approximately 6 hours travel time).

Wanaka enjoys a wide range of accommodation options, from backpackers, youth hostels, motels and hotels to luxury lodges. Accommodation on this course is not included, allowing you the freedom to choose from the many excellent local establishments.

## HOW TO FIND US

The course begins at 9.00am on Day 1 at our office at 20 Brownston Street, Wanaka. You will need to arrive in town the night prior to the course commencing. Please give us a call to confirm your arrival in town.

## COURSE FEE

NZ\$1,425 per person for a 1:4 guide to skier ratio.

The price includes:

- Guide fees
- Use of group technical equipment (transceiver/shovel/probe, etc.)
- Ground transportation
- Backcountry Lift Pass for days operating outside of Treble Cone ski field
- MSC Backcountry Avalanche Certificate
- 'A Climber's Guide to NZ Mountaineering Techniques' by Guy Cotter and Mark Sedon
- 'Avalanche Awareness in the New Zealand Backcountry' by Penny Goddard
- MSC Backcountry Avalanche Resource Kit
- Department of Conservation concession fees
- 15% New Zealand Goods and Services Tax

**NOTE:** Prices are subject to change without notice.

## PAYMENT DETAILS

All payments should be made by bank transfer to the following bank and account:

**Bank:** Bank of New Zealand  
**For the Account of:** Adventure Consultants Limited  
**Account Number:** 02 0673 0043443 00  
**Account Type:** NZ Dollars

**NOTE:** All bank transfer charges are for the remitter's account.

We also accept your deposit and balance payment by credit card (Visa, Mastercard or Amex) plus a 3% card charge.



▲ Learn from qualified and experienced mountain and ski guides. Photo: Camilla Rutherford

## DEPOSIT

To confirm place on one of our courses, we require a completed registration form with a deposit of NZ\$500 per person.

## BALANCE

The balance payment is due 60 days prior to the course start date.

## CANCELLATION & REFUND POLICY

- Cancellations outside of 60 days incur a NZ\$250 cancellation fee.
- For cancellations made within 60 days of the trip commencement date we reserve the right to retain 50% of the full fee.
- For cancellations made within 30 days of the trip commencement date we reserve the right to retain 75% of the full fee.
- For cancellations within 15 days of the departure date a cancellation fee of 100% of the full fee applies.

We recommend you take out trip cancellation insurance via your travel agent if you wish to be covered against cancellation due to medical or personal reasons.

## HOW TO JOIN THIS COURSE

If you would like to join one of our 2021 Backcountry Avalanche Courses, please complete our online booking form and forward your deposit payment at <https://www.adventureconsultants.com/skiing/new-zealand-guided-ski-touring/backcountry-avalanche-course/book-now>.

## CONTACT US

If you require more information, please contact us at:

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▲ Break free of the ski fields in confidence. Photo: Suze Kelly



Adventure Consultants is affiliated to the New Zealand Mountain Guides Association (NZMGA), New Zealand Alpine Club (NZAC) and a corporate member of the American Alpine Club (AAC). Adventure Consultants is a supporter of the dZi Foundation in Nepal for their 'Revitalise a Village' programmes.

Adventure Consultants perform to IFMGA/UIAGM standards and are world leaders in high altitude guiding.

