

Sierra Avalanche Center
Avalanche Level 2 for Motorized Users
2021 Course Syllabus

Course Summary

This course presents advanced concepts of recreational avalanche risk management for motorized users. Learning will occur through a mix of an online session and three days of field practice. This course follows the guidelines for Recreational Level 2 Avalanche Training as established by the American Avalanche Association.

Schedule

Each class will begin with a mandatory online session prior to field days. Field days will run from 9am-5pm. Instructors will communicate specific plans prior to and throughout the class. Attendance and participation in the full class is mandatory.

Course Requirements:

Participants must:

- Be an advanced rider, comfortable side-hilling to both sides while making adjustments around obstacles, and able to self-extricate from basic stucks. Riding ability is much more important on the Level 2 compared to Level 1 and Rescue classes - please do not overestimate your riding ability.
- Bring a functioning beacon, shovel, and probe. [Beacons should be modern three-antennae](#), shovels should be made specifically for avalanche rescue, and probes should be 270cm or longer. Avalanche gear must be worn/carried on self, and not in tunnel bag. An extra shovel in tunnel bag is recommended.
- Wear a DOT approved helmet and weather-appropriate gear.
- Ride a reliable, well maintained snowmobile/snowbike, capable of off-trail travel. Machines must be registered with visible registration markings. Spare belts and repair kits are strongly recommended. Poorly maintained machines and/or machines not intended for off-trail travel may jeopardize the experience of others.
- Read the required materials and apply the Daily Flow and Alerts stickers to machines for easy reference while riding.
- Bring a radio capable of operating on [FRS/GMRS frequencies](#).

Required Text and Materials:

- [The SAC Daily Flow](#) video and user guide pages. A paper copy of *The SAC Daily Flow* book will be provided in class.
- Daily Flow and Alerts stickers, available for free at most regional powersports dealers. Additional stickers will be provided in class.
- Handouts and/or weblinks as provided.
- Due to Covid-19, all participants must wear a face covering when in close proximity to others. Consider a neck gaiter or balaclava (without nose or mouth holes) that would be appropriate for riding regardless of Covid-19.

Learning Outcomes

The successful student will be able to:

- Manage risk for peers in an informal setting.
- Consider the impact that advanced avalanche training has on group dynamics.
- Use relationships between weather, snowpack, and avalanches to anticipate hazards.
- Facilitate discussions with riding partners to create safety margins using terrain and/or timing.
- Confirm details with riding partners and develop a simple plan as a group contract.
- Manage the riding group by using guiding techniques to lead through non-avalanche and avalanche terrain.
- Use the SAC Conditions and Terrain Alerts stickers to maintain awareness and communicate changes and/or concerns to the riding group.
- Use industry standard techniques to make observations by digging below the snow surface, and to communicate weather, snowpack, and avalanche conditions to others.
- Lead group discussions that link observed conditions to terrain use.
- Encourage partners to learn from each day by using daily debriefs.
- Submit observations to SAC using technical language and/or images and videos.

Proposed Itinerary

The exact itinerary may change, depending on weather, avalanche conditions, and other factors. Due to Covid-19, indoor classroom sessions are not planned for 2021.

Online session (pre-course reading: [The SAC Daily Flow](#) videos and user guide):

- Instructor and student introductions
- Preview of proposed course itinerary and discussion of syllabus, including Covid-19 mitigation
- Where does this course fit within the American Avalanche Association's educational matrix, and what can students expect from formal avalanche education?
- General risk management systems, and the SAC Daily Flow
- Applying the Daily Flow specifically to a Level 2 class
- Review pre-course reading
- Prep for field sessions

Day 1:

- Instructor-led demo of *Before Leaving* components of the SAC Daily Flow
- Instructor-led *Manage Your Group to Maintain Awareness of Conditions* practice site.
- *Stop to Talk* about riding session dedicated to *Maintain Awareness of Conditions*.
- Instructor demo and coaching of *Other Signs of Instability*: Informal and formal observations

(Day 1 continued)

- Instructor-led *Manage Your Group* to practice site for *Maintain Awareness of Terrain*
- Instructor-led *Manage Your Group* using advanced spacing/spotting techniques.
- Time permitting, 2nd round of formal observations.
- Instructor-led demo of *Manage Your Group* while play riding back to trailhead
- *Debrief* day including summarize observations, and prep for next day

Day 2:

- Review/Q&A, including discussion of SAC observations page from prior day
- Instructor-facilitated SAC Daily Flow: *Before Leaving*
- Instructor-facilitated *Manage Your Group* to *Maintain Awareness of Conditions* practice site.
- *Stop to Talk* about riding session dedicated to *Maintain Awareness of Conditions*.
- Informal and formal observations practice.
- Instructor-facilitated *Manage Your Group* using advanced spacing/spotting techniques.
- Instructor-facilitated demo of *Manage Your Group* while play riding back to trailhead
- *Debrief* day including summarize observations, and prep for next day

Day 3

- Review/Q&A, including discussion of SAC observations page from prior day
- Student-led SAC Daily Flow: *Before Leaving*
- Student-led *Manage Your Group* to *Maintain Awareness of Conditions* practice site.
- *Stop to Talk* about riding session dedicated to *Maintain Awareness of Conditions*.
- Informal and formal observations practice.
- Student-led *Manage Your Group* using advanced spacing/spotting techniques.
- Student-led *Manage Your Group* while play riding back to trailhead
- *Debrief* day including summarize observations, debrief course