

# 4 Day Backcountry Avalanche Course

**7:30am - Meet your group and Instructor/s** at “Darfield Bakery” in Darfield, a small town 30 mins from Christchurch on SH73 (good food and good coffee).

*Note: if you're travelling from the west coast please contact us to arrange our instructor to meet you in Castle Hill Village instead.*

## **Day 1 Overview**

Today is all about getting to grips with the essential skills and equipment that allows you to travel in the mountains safely.

### **08:30am - Arrive at Mt Cheeseman Ski area or Broken River ski area**

- Gear check & hand out OENZ supplied gear
- Packing and selecting appropriate gear for use in the NZ mountains
- How to pack and carry avalanche and alpine equipment.
- Fitting crampons to boots & holding an ice axe
- Check avalanche transceivers (before you go)
- Assembling and using a probe- Spiral probing
- Avalanche transceiver search practice

### **12:30ish – Lunch** (out in the field)

- Avalanche scenario search (single burial- single searcher)
- Identifying avalanche terrain. Terrain - Angle, Aspect, Altitude Trigger points, Traps
- Observations. weather and snow pack – Recent activity, cracking/whooping, rapid loading, wind, temperature

### **2:30pm – 3:30 pm** Back at Vehicles, drive to Arthurs Pass lodge

### **4:00-6:00 pm** – Theory session, PowerPoint

### **Evening**

- Cook your dinner at the lodge.

## Day 2 Overview

Today our aim is to look at safe route travel techniques – identify avalanche terrain and perform rescue scenarios.

**6:30-7:30am Breakfast (bring your own as nothing is open this early in Arthurs Pass)**

**7:30-8am – pack and clean lodge.**

- Check avalanche & weather forecast, talk through implications and considerations based on this forecast and previous days observations.
- Trip planning –plan our day

**9:30-10:00 am – Arrive at practical training location**

- Make our way up using safe travel & avalanche avoidance techniques
  - Spacing
  - Visual contact
  - Islands of safety
  - Safe travel routes
  - Communication
  - Escape routes

**12:30pm Lunch (along the way)**

- Avalanche search practice
- Rescue digging
- Team digging scenario (deep burial)
- Full Avalanche rescue scenarios- multiple burials, multiple searchers

**3:30pm – 4:30 pm** Back at Vehicles, drive to Arthurs Pass lodge

**Evening**

- Cook your dinner at the lodge.

## Day 3 Overview

Today our aim is to introduce deeper snowpack analysis and learn how to collect data throughout the day to assist with good decision making.

**6:30-7:30am Breakfast (bring your own as nothing is open this early in Arthurs Pass)**

**7:30-8am**

- Check avalanche & weather forecast, talk through implications and considerations based on this forecast and previous days observations.
- Trip planning –plan our day

**9:30-10:00 am – Arrive at practical training location**

- Introduce snow pack information while moving through terrain
  - Simple stability test
  - Snow crystal identification
  - Hand Shear
  - Test slopes and profiles

**12:30pm Lunch (along the way)**

- Introducing snow stability and snow pack tests
  - Compression tests
  - Extended column tests

**3:30pm – 4:30 pm** Back at Vehicles, drive to Arthurs Pass lodge

**Evening**

- Cook your dinner at the lodge.

## Day 4 Overview

Today our aim is to pull all of the skills and knowledge together and apply it in a concise and effective plan to move safely in the mountains.

**6:30-7:30am Breakfast (bring your own as nothing is open this early in Arthurs Pass)**

**7:30-8am – pack and clean.**

- Participant led check of avalanche & weather forecast, talk through implications and considerations based on this forecast and previous day's observations.
- Trip planning –plan our day

**9:30-10:00 am – Arrive at practical training location**

Today is the day we pull it all together. Today will be participant led with the instructor overseeing and ensuring no unsafe decisions are made.

You will have the opportunity to plan a route based on weather, avalanche and group information. While out walking you will apply safe terrain travel techniques while taking samples of data along the way to check for changing conditions and increase/decrease in avalanche danger.

**12:30pm Lunch (along the way)**

**There will be an opportunity in the afternoon to revisit any of the skills or information covered that is unclear.**

**3:30-4:30pm – Back at vehicles, time to say good bye**

*Note: From the ski area carpark it is approx. 1.5-2hrs back to Christchurch (we usually get back into Christchurch between 5:00-6:00pm)*

*\*Please note that this is just a guide to how the course normally run and your instructor may run the course in a different order to best fit in with local conditions and the abilities or the group.*