

Avalanche Training in the CSP

Ski areas with avalanche potential are largely located in British Columbia and western Alberta, but also in some parts of the Yukon, Quebec and the Maritime provinces. For the majority of Canadian Ski Patrol patrollers, avalanches are not a concern, but for some members, it is part of their everyday operating environment.

The CSP has played an active role in providing avalanche courses to patrollers and the general public for over 45 years. Examples include:

- In 1966, the CSP taught the first avalanche course for the public in Banff
- In 1998, the CSP partnered with the Canadian Avalanche Association (CAA) to create a national standard for avalanche education for non-professionals. These courses today are called the “*Avalanche Skills Training*” (AST) courses.

Avalanche Training for patrollers continues to this day. An extensive rewrite of the “*Avalanche Safety & Rescue*” chapter of the Patrollers Manual was completed in 2010 and published in 2011. A companion two to three hour “*Introduction to Avalanche Safety*” training module was developed, to be taught to **all** CSP patrollers across Canada.

For CSP patrollers who work at ski areas with avalanche potential, optional training include the above mentioned AST courses. In addition, training may be provided by individual area paid ski patrols, to enable the CSP patrollers to be valuable participants in the ski area’s Avalanche Rescue Plan.

An overview of the AST programs can be found at [Canadian Avalanche Centre’s \(CAC\)](#)

In addition, there are several “online” avalanche courses available:

- Have you taken an avalanche course previously and feel in need of an update or refresher course?
- New to the backcountry/off piste skiing and not sure of what avalanche safety is all about?
- Not sure of what you think you know or don’t know about travel in avalanche terrain?

Then check out CAC’s “[Online Avalanche Course](#),” or Virtual Mountain’s “[Welcome to the Avalanche Site](#)”.

But remember *online avalanche course are NOT intended to replace the formal avalanche training in AST 1 & AST 2 courses!*