



ISIA Stamp-Level Avalanche Awareness Course 2016

Description:

Commercial ski/snowboard areas in other parts of the world are vastly different from NZ in size, terrain, snow conditions and operation policies. The ISIA Avalanche course is intended for ski, snowboard and telemark instructors wanting to expand their knowledge of the mountain environment, to travel safely within it and impart knowledge useful for an instructor within organized ski area boundaries worldwide. This course has been designed to address the needs of NZSIA members toward ISIA certification, but historically attracted a much wider audience. The course is offered independently, using avalanche safety industry qualified and experienced practitioners; making the most of their expertise.



This course is one of the required components towards achieving international (ISIA stamp or card) status beyond from your NZSIA instructing qualifications. Documented attendance at a professional MSC Avalanche Stage I course or a MSC (4 day) Backcountry Course is acceptable as a cross-credit for the ISIA Avalanche Course toward ISIA status.



The ISIA Stamp-Level Avalanche Awareness course provides a better understanding of the nature of avalanches and what is needed to make decisions about personal safety when travelling in avalanche terrain with a group. Additionally, this course will help develop more advanced observation and route finding skills for moving in the mountains. Although we stress the need for avoiding avalanche related rescue, time is also dedicated to learning the technical skills required for small party rescue and handling other emergency situations.

Prerequisites:

There is no prerequisite qualifications for the ISIA course, however candidates **must** be capable of travelling in-control and comfortably, (regarding personal fitness, clothing and nutrition), in challenging terrain and snow conditions, (see **Field Days** below). The course may be attended by members of the NZSIA and non-members at no additional cost.

Content/Format:

ISIA Stamp-Level Avalanche Awareness course is four days in length and involves a daily combination of classroom and field study. The length of each and sequence may vary do to weather or other considerations. Field study may take place within and beyond commercial ski area boundaries. This course will be under the guidance of a UIAGM guide or NZMGA qualified guide who is also Level 2 Avalanche qualified. The course covers:

- Mountain weather and NZ information sources
- Snow Stability (sources, characteristics, changes and basic tests)
- Decision making and human influences
- Safety equipment (including use of transceivers)
- Identification of avalanche terrain (including relationship to map)
- Navigation techniques
- Characteristics of avalanche phenomenon
- Observation techniques
- Group travel in avalanche terrain
- Small party search and rescue
- Handling emergency situations
- Snow shelter construction
- Future study options

Lectures

Lectures generally begin in the morning at 9am and are prior to an afternoon field session if the classroom is on the mountain. The day usually concludes in the classroom by 4pm. Attendees are encouraged to bring a notepad and pencil. Off-mountain classroom venues may involve morning meetings or evening sessions the night prior to a field day. The venue will be confirmed by your instructor. Please arrive promptly and “ready to learn”.

Field Days

Field days focus on practical aspects and last half to two thirds of the day. Participants are required to bring a 20-50 L. backpack capable of carrying skis or snowboards and avalanche & personal safety gear. Limited amounts of avalanche safety gear, (457 kHz transceiver, and collapsible probe and shovel) may be available from your instructor or local sports shop at

your additional expense (and may vary by region). Snow (or pruning) saws and compass will be useful but not required.

Your personal safety gear should include an extra layer of clothing, sun protection, water, snacks and perhaps a pack lunch.

Additionally, you will need a means of travel in the backcountry, (for usually the last 3 of the 4 days). Depending on the conditions, climbing skins with touring skis/bindings, snowshoes and occasionally ski/snowboard boots are options. Contact your instructor for your most likely needs and possible sources for hire or purchase.

Assessment:

Transceiver competency and trip planning considerations will be the only assessed components of the course.

The transceiver assessment, typically done on day 3 or 4 of the course, is conducted to the following standard:

Locate 1 transceiver buried 60cm deep below a 50cm x 50cm target within 4 minutes within a 50m x 50m site. Shovel, probe and transceiver must be stowed in pack or worn as when touring then assembled, target probed and shovel placed where digging would commence within this time frame.

The trip planning considerations are assessed in quiz format, typically on the last day of the course. The minimum passing standard is 70% correct answers.

Certificate:

For ISIA Stamp-Level courses, a 'Certificate of Attendance/Trip Planning & Transceiver Competency' will be issued by the Course Director provided that participants attend the entire course and meet the assessment requirements.

Venue/Dates/Cost/Registration:

The next course is scheduled to be held at Cardrona Alpine Resort 25-28 Sept, 2016 and costs \$600 per person. A minimum of 4 participants is required to run a course and the maximum is 12. A place on the course is reserved only after course payment is received. For staffing purposes please register for course AT LEAST 2 weeks prior to course start. Please contact crystalclear.avoed@gmail.com for further information.

