

Learn From the Pros: Recreational Level 1 Avalanche Course (with Silverton Avalanche School at IMCS)

The backcountry is always telling a story. This course teaches your group how to read it.

Whether your crew skis, splitboards, climbs, or snowshoes, traveling in winter terrain means learning to manage avalanche risk and make good decisions together. The Silverton Avalanche School (SAS) Recreational Level 1 Avalanche Course at the International Mountain Climbing School is a hands-on, immersive introduction to avalanche awareness, terrain assessment, rescue skills, and safer backcountry travel.

This nationally recognized curriculum blends classroom learning with real-world field practice, helping groups build a shared language and decision-making framework for winter travel. You'll learn how to interpret snowpack, weather, and terrain, recognize red flags, avoid common human-factor traps, and plan tours with intention.

What Your Group Will Learn

- How to “read the story of winter” through snowpack, weather, terrain, and human factors
- Ritualized trip planning using the Silverton Avalanche School field book
- Understanding and applying avalanche forecasts and weather resources
- Companion rescue fundamentals with beacon, probe, and shovel
- Digital mapping and tour planning tools
- Identifying avalanche terrain at both big-picture and on-the-ground scales
- Making field observations and tracking changing conditions
- Human dynamics, decision traps, and group communication
- Time management and emergency planning in winter terrain

Format & Schedule (3 Days)

Day 1 – Classroom + Field Rescue Skills

Introduction to avalanche fundamentals and hands-on companion rescue practice.

Day 2 – Forecasting, Mapping & Field Observations

Deep dive into planning tools and guided field travel to apply what you've learned.

Day 3 – Student-Led Backcountry Tour

Put it all together on a 4–6 hour tour with instructor feedback and course debrief.

Who This Course Is For

This course is ideal for:

- Backcountry skiers & splitboarders
- Ice climbers, mountaineers, and winter hikers
- Friend groups, clubs, guide collectives, or professional teams
- Anyone planning to travel in or near avalanche terrain

Participants should be capable of traveling 2,000–4,000 vertical feet two days in a row and prepared for full winter days near or above treeline.

Gear

Students are encouraged to bring their own avalanche transceiver, probe, and shovel to build proficiency with their personal equipment. Loaner rescue gear is available if needed. All participants receive a Silverton Avalanche School field handbook to use on future trips.

Why Train with IMCS & Silverton Avalanche School

IMCS is the only Silverton Avalanche School provider on the East Coast and part of SAS's national provider network. SAS is the oldest continuously operating avalanche education program in the U.S., with a curriculum rooted in national standards from the American Avalanche Association and decades of real-world mountain experience.

This course emphasizes student-centered, inquiry-based learning so your group doesn't just memorize information—you build judgment, habits, and systems you'll use for a lifetime of safer backcountry travel.