

## U.S. Forest Service Avalanche Class Information

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This informational sheet provides the key points made during a recent Avalanche class with Kevin Davis, from the U.S. Forest Service. If you have further questions or need additional information, please contact Kevin.

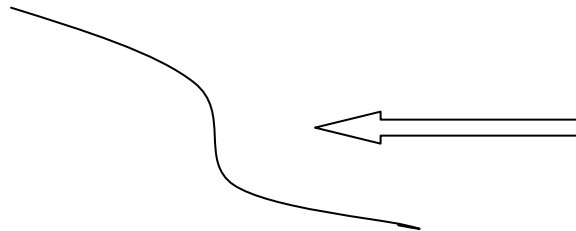
Common statement heard about avalanche safety from snowmobilers: **“I’m too good of a rider for it to happen to me!” WRONG!** You are exactly the person that should be taking a class because your riding ability is no defense against an avalanche! And how are you going to save your buddy if you can’t even prepare to save yourself??

**Avalanches are mainly caused by the person who has been caught in them.**

**“Know before you go!”** This statement should be used every time a person even thinks about going out snowmobiling. **Knowledge can save a life; Ignorance can cost one.**

3 main things to know before you go:

1. Slab condition
2. Weak layers
3. Force it takes to rip a layer loose.



Convex slopes are the most prime for avalanche!

Look for surface hoar frost, or ball bearing snow (snow hail); new snow on a layer of this is an avalanche waiting to happen.

Southwest storms are prevalent in the Northern Idaho area, which means that North and Northeast slopes are most risky for avalanche because of snow loads that build up on these faces.

Is it windy or has it been windy? Wind causes much deeper snow on the North and NE slopes terrain and is a heavier layer that easily breaks loose.

Is it snowing? How hard? What is the temperature now and an hour from now? Large increases or decreases in temperature can change a slope very quickly from being suitable for riding to being a high avalanche risk.

More snow-more stress!

On your way out first thing in the morning- go along bank and do a hand sweep, track test or wedge slope cut to see what conditions are like before you get to the slopes that could be dangerous. Watch for balls of

snow that have rolled, small slides, snow falling out of all the trees (this means wind and deeper snow around trees, with potential heavy snow packs and risk).

Knowing the consequences of your actions tends to influence behavior much more than knowing the rules to follow.

**GO ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION! LISTEN TO YOUR INNER SELF (THE BIRDIE IN YOUR HEAD); IT MOST LIKELY KNOWS BETTER THAN YOUR BUDDY OR YOUR EGO!**

**BUY A COMPASS!**

Always carry a shovel and probes in a pack on your back!

Always wear an avalanche beacon and check the batteries often. They should be no more than 90% at any time! Save the 90% or less batteries for other gadgets, but always protect your life with good batteries in the beacon!