

# BE PREPARED FOR AN AVALANCHE



FEMA

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People caught in avalanches can die from suffocation, trauma, or hypothermia. An average of 28 people die in avalanches every winter in the U.S.

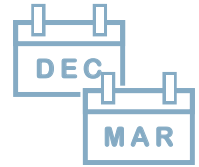
An avalanche is a large amount of snow moving quickly down a mountain. People caught beneath the heavy snow from an avalanche may not be able to dig out.



Can be caused by people, new snow, and wind



Can move at speeds of 60–80 mph



Peak season is December through March

## PROTECT YOURSELF FROM AN AVALANCHE

Get training on how to recognize hazardous conditions and locations to avoid.



Learn how to properly use safety equipment.



Sign up for alerts on current avalanche dangers.



Use proper equipment. This should include helmets and materials to create pockets of air if trapped.



Use devices to support rescue.



Use a guide familiar with the area. Always have a buddy.



# HOW TO STAY SAFE WHEN AN AVALANCHE THREATENS



**Learn about your local avalanche risk.**

**Sign up for alerts from a U.S. Forest Service Avalanche Center near you.**

Your community may also have a local warning system.

**Learn the signs of an avalanche** and how to use safety and rescue equipment.

**Take first aid training** to recognize and treat suffocation, hypothermia, traumatic injury, and shock.

**Travel with a guide** who knows the locations to avoid. Always travel in pairs.

**Follow avalanche warnings on roads.**

Roads may be closed or vehicles may be advised not to stop on the roadside.

**Know the signs of increased danger,** including recent avalanches and shooting cracks across slopes.

**Avoid areas of increased risk** like slopes steeper than 30 degrees or areas downhill of steep slopes.



**Wear a helmet** to help reduce head injuries **and an avalanche beacon** to help others locate you.

**Use an avalanche airbag that may create air pockets** to give you more space to breathe and help you from being completely buried.

**Carry a collapsible avalanche probe** and a small shovel to help rescue others.

**If your partner or others are buried, call 9-1-1** and then begin to search.

**Treat others** for suffocation, hypothermia, traumatic injury, or shock.



**Know the signs and ways to treat hypothermia.**

**Hypothermia** is an unusually low body temperature. A body temperature below 95 degrees is an emergency.

- **Signs:** Shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech, and drowsiness.
- **Actions:** Go to a warm room or shelter. Warm the center of the body first—chest, neck, head, and groin. Keep the person dry and wrapped up in warm blankets, including the head and neck.

## Take an Active Role in Your Safety

Go to **Ready.gov** and search for **avalanche**. Download the **FEMA app** to get more information about preparing for an **avalanche**.

To learn of current **avalanche** conditions in your area visit [www.avalanche.org](http://www.avalanche.org).



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