

American Alpine Institute Advanced Mountain Rescue Itinerary

The Advanced Mountain Rescue course will take place in three settings. The first will be in a classroom, where we will look at a variety of systems and discuss the issues surrounding them. The second will be at local crags where we will work in steep and high-angle environments. And the third will be on Mount Baker, where we will address steep and high-angle environments as well as crevasse issues on snow and ice.

Participants will meet at 8am on the first day of the program. There we will complete a gear check and then make a decision on the following days. There may be up to three days of backcountry training on this program. However, the content of this course is incredibly intense and if there are weather issues, you should be prepared to spend more time in the front-country. You should be flexible with your Bellingham accommodations.

Participants may choose to camp at Larabee State Park, located six miles from the Institute or to stay at a local hotel. The Institute can provide daily transportation to and from the Best Western Heritage Inn in Bellingham.

Temperatures at front-country steep and high-angle locations in the spring and summer will range from 50 to 80-degrees Fahrenheit. Temperatures in the backcountry may drop to as low as 30-degrees. Rain is not uncommon, even in the middle of the summer, so dress appropriately.

Text Book: Technical Rescue Riggers Guide by Rick Lipke – AAI has library copies of this text available and may have some for sale. If you wish to buy a copy, call prior to the program to confirm. You may also order this online from several companies.

Day One:

Students will arrive at 8am at the American Alpine Institute headquarters for the first day of the program. This will be a front-country day that includes a comprehensive equipment check. Be sure to bring all of your gear

Classroom Sessions: The team will go over several topics including the strength of snow and ice anchors, bolts, two tensioned systems, plaquette systems, the diminishing loop and the San Juan Pickoff.

Lodging: front-country camp or hotel

Day Two:

The team will meet at 7am at the American Alpine Institute to prep for the backcountry. If the conditions are not right, this day may be switched with Day 5.

Transportation: If the team decides to go into the backcountry, they will drive approximately 1 hour to the trailhead. From there we will hike approximately 3 miles to a camp at 6,000-feet.

Field Sessions: review of snow school techniques and snow anchors, introduction to steep angle litter haul and lower with attendants, backcountry patient packaging
Lodging: backcountry camp

Day Three

Field Sessions: crevasse rescue comprehensive – in depth study of team rescue as well as self rescue in a crevasse fall scenario; instruction will include descending into the crevasse to perform first aid on the client before hauling him out; systems will include the drop C, 3:1, and 6:1 crevasse rescue hauling systems

Lodging: backcountry camp

Day Four:

Field Sessions: The team will work on managing a litter on low-angle snow terrain. Develop techniques to manage litter through a crevasse field and an icefall. Once this is complete the team will hike out.

Lodging: front-country camp or hotel

Day Five:

This day may be interchangeable with the second day depending on weather.

Classroom Session: Discuss a high-end scenario. This scenario will have a pickoff and will require lowering and hauling systems in complex terrain.

Field Sessions: Execute a difficult rescue.

Lodging: front-country camp or hotel

Weather Options:

The Cascades are a wet range, and a rescue team has to be prepared for wet conditions. However, sometimes rain and snow is a hindrance to the learning environment. This is especially true if everyone is cold and wet while trying to understand complex concepts. As such, this course has some poor weather options that will still provide participants with significant advanced level experiences.

Optional Front Country Day #1:

Instead of going into the backcountry, the team may spend a significant amount of time working on highlines and reeves at a front-country location. The highline scenario will be designed to go over a serious chasm that will require advanced rigging techniques.

Optional Front Country Day #2:

In the unlikely event that there is a second front-country day, the team will have a second difficult rescue scenario with significantly different problems than the scenario encountered on Day Five.