



Equipment Shop American Alpine Institute

Home of The Guides Choice Testing Program | Alpine Equipment & Clothing

Equipment Specialist Position

The American Alpine Institute is looking for a creative and energetic person who has great enthusiasm for people, climbing and a desire to work for a company that is committed to providing the best climbing education in America.

Introduction to the position

As an Equipment Specialist you will be employed part-time (20-30 hours a week) during the main climbing season at The American Alpine Institute which runs from April to October. We will be looking to hire around the beginning of March. We finish off the year with a giant gear sale which usually happens mid-October, and after that the position is done for the season.

As an Equipment Specialist you play an all-important role during the busy-time of the year. Your main responsibilities will be working on rendezvous (RVs for short), meetings with climbers for orientation and rentals the morning that their courses head to the mountains and working on returns (RT's for short), helping clients on courses coming back from the mountains to turn in rental gear, pick up luggage, etc.

You will also assist in retail shop sales and rental service duties. The other main focus of the position is equipment maintenance. Usually the weekends are the busiest days for RV's and RT's, and the weekdays are spent cleaning, repairing, and inspecting equipment to get it ready to be used again.

Introduction to the company

The American Alpine Institute (AAI) is a mountaineering climbing school and guide service based in Bellingham that operates in 6 states and 16 countries. Many national reviewers have judged the Institute to be the best business of its type in North America. We are grateful for the praise and work hard to re-earn that reputation every day.

Sixteen people work in program administration and equipment services, and 55 guides lead courses and expeditions worldwide. The Institute offers programs at all skill levels in rock

climbing, ice climbing, mountaineering, backpacking, backcountry skiing, avalanche skills, and expedition climbing.

The Institute is an outdoor industry leader in environmental education and protection. AAI is committed to offset 100% of its carbon emissions, including energy consumed in the office, travel, and field programs. The Institute is also committed to leading by example in business ethics and through innovative programming and operations in environmental protection, conservation, and preservation. AAI staff members serve on boards of directors of non-profit environmental research and educational organizations, and the Institute provides financial support to those organizations as well.

AAI staff members have many interests, enjoy the outdoors in general, and pursue many forms of outdoor recreation. They are kind, good humored, smart, and enthusiastic, and they are a lot of fun to work with. Many long-term friendships are established while working at the Institute.

The Equipment Shop was established to provide the highest quality equipment to climbers going on the Institute's courses and guided ascents as well as to the climbers in the general public. We have a retail shop that focuses on the best gear available for mountain sports as well as a rental shop that rents very high quality gear. Staff in the Equipment Shop supplement the sale and rental of top equipment with education that is based on thorough knowledge of the gear. If you don't know the gear in great detail when you begin the job, you will by the end of the first month.

Climbers work with very detailed equipment lists that we provide to them before they arrive in Bellingham for their program. Most arrive very well equipped or with a plan to complete their checklist of needed clothing and gear with purchases at the Equipment Shop. The shop carries a complete line of clothing and gear, so if the need were to arise, a climber could be totally outfitted on the spot.

The Equipment Shop also plays a major role helping the guides who work at the Institute. Shop process sales of gear to guides at a major discount, facilitate pro-deals for them, and help them check out technical and specialized gear that is needed on some courses.

Desired Qualifications in the Candidate

The successful applicant will have most of the following attributes:

1. Ability to work well with others and work as a team
2. Excellent task management and prioritization skills
3. Good communication skills
4. Willingness to learn, but also to teach
5. Creativity in problem solving
6. Flexibility in scheduling
7. An ability to work with a high level of energy, commitment, and personal responsibility

Personal characteristics of the candidate

- strong work ethic
- honest and dependable
- enthusiastic personality (!)
- sense of humor (Ha!)
- pride in work and a sense of achievement in bringing tasks to completion
- ability to provide and receive feedback
- some experience either backpacking, rock climbing, or mountaineering

Hours

The Equipment Specialist position is a part-time position running from March-October. Expect to work 20-30 hours a week, but there is definitely some flexibility there. You can also expect to, at times, work more hours if it is especially busy. The position includes working weekends and evening trip returns while on-call. Trips are scheduled to return in the late afternoon, but delays are not uncommon.

Pay

Pay is commensurate with experience.

Benefits

COURSES: As an Equipment Specialist, you are entitled to take two 3-day or one 6-day AAI course for free once a year. Choice must take into account guide/client ratio limits and getting coverage of shop hours by colleagues. For example, it is a lot easier to take a course in late August or September than earlier in the summer when courses tend to be booked up and the shop is very busy. July tends to be the busiest month, so taking a 6-day course is not practical, but you could potentially take such a course in one of the slower months.

TIME OFF: We have a pretty awesome dynamic in the shop in terms of working to make each other's time off for special trips work out. We are after all "outdoorsy" ourselves, and quality time for play in the mountains is really important to us. We are pretty flexible and try to cover each other to take off a long weekend or a random week day to go and have fun. We run a really well 'give and get back' dynamic. Outside of the busy season, if there are longer periods of time off that you would like to request, team members are asked to make the request well in advance, and then we will make it happen.

PRO DEALS AND DISCOUNTS: All employees at the American Alpine Institute are able to purchase items in the Equipment Shop at 35% off.

We also have many pro deal opportunities with companies that we work with in the shop. Some prominent examples are Patagonia, Arc'teryx, La Sportiva, Rab Equipment, and Black Crows. These prodeals tend to be anywhere from 40%-60% off.

Application Process

- Complete a Wufoo application form here:
<https://alpineinstitute.wufoo.com/forms/z2llbw60ymnmd8/>

Be sure to include your:

- Résumé
- Cover Letter

Your cover letter is a very important part of the application. In addition to providing us with an introduction to who you are (perhaps touching on where you've been and where you're going in life), would you please specifically address the following questions:

1. Why do you feel this job could be a "good fit" for you (in terms of both duties and hours)?
2. How do you meet the desired qualifications?
3. What aspects of the work do you think you would enjoy the most?
4. If you do not live right in Bellingham, please explain how you will be able to work some short shifts without it being very inconvenient because of your commute.

Thank you in advance for your application and letter!