



Equipment Shop American Alpine Institute

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

The Assistant Shop Manager Position

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

Introduction to the position

We are looking to hire someone for this position in July-August. As Assistant Shop Manager you will play a pivotal role in managing a busy mountaineering and climbing equipment shop, with duties ranging from retail ordering to team management.

The role of the Assistant Shop Manager is dynamic, with core responsibilities plus other, secondary tasks that arise out of a variety of circumstances that vary week-to-week. The core responsibilities include:

- Detailed reporting and sales tracking facilitate the purchase of proper quantities of stock to meet all Retail needs. Correspond with sales reps to ensure best deals are pursued when ordering.
- Oversee and maintain Retail Shop budget, including meeting with Senior Admins to discuss trends and year-end inventory and number crunching.
- Shop Website & E-Commerce Lead. Maintain and refresh product-related content of the website, including the update of product listings; maintenance of collections; updating announcements; experiment and innovate within the existing theme and web design; and ensure that the E-Commerce inventory is kept up to date within the point-of-sale inventory.
- Co-manage a team of Equipment Specialists and help to elevate and empower them in their completion of regular Shop tasks.
- Conduct regular trainings for staff on new processes and skills, ranging from running a sale to sharpening ice tools.

Secondary tasks include but are not limited to:

- Leading AAI Course Rendezvous (Pre-climb meetings) when needed.

- Assist with the coordination of the American Alpine Institute Guide's Choice Awards, an annual gear testing program that requires facilitation of requesting equipment, getting it into the hands of AAI guides and synthesizing reviews into a slate of winners.
- Attend yearly Outdoor Industry trade shows such as Outdoor Retailer and maintain knowledge of the newest equipment and sales rep relationships.

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, canyoning, technical rescue, 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 lead 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 attending Institute courses and guided ascents as well as to 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 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 have in-depth knowledge of the gear when you begin, you will by the end of the first month.

Climbers attending AAI programs work with very detailed equipment lists that we provide to them before they arrive in Bellingham. 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 outfitted on the spot.

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

Desired qualifications in the candidate

A successful applicant will have a combination of at least some of the following attributes. If you don't meet all of these qualifications, please still apply for the position. We are a teaching institution, and aren't shy about building people into roles they desire:

1. Experience working in the outdoor industry with at least basic knowledge of mountaineering, climbing, backpacking and snow sports equipment.
2. Experience as a retail buyer balancing an annual budget against seasonal needs.
3. Time spent running a point-of-sale (POS) system and a willingness to learn the backend of a POS and E-Commerce system.
4. Excellent team management and leadership skills.
5. Good communication skills.
6. Creativity in problem solving.
7. An ability to work with a high level of energy, commitment, and personal responsibility.
8. Flexibility in scheduling and a willingness to work as part of a team.

Personal characteristics of the candidate

- Strong work ethic
- Honesty and dependability
- 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
- Experience backpacking, rock climbing, or mountaineering

Hours

The Assistant Shop Manager is a year-round position, with Full-Time work at 40 hours a week. Typical schedules are Monday-Friday during regular hours 10 a.m. — 6 p.m., though some weekend days will be required.

Wage and Benefits

- **WAGE:** \$18/hr. The American Alpine Institute provides yearly raises for all Full-Time employees.

- **COURSES:** As Assistant Shop Manager, you are entitled to take an AAI course for free once a year. Choice must take into account guide/client ratio limits and getting coverage of shop hours by colleagues.
- **MEDICAL STIPEND:** After a period of six months, full-time employees receive a medical stipend. Initially, this stipend is \$60 a month. Employees receive a yearly “raise” in their medical stipend as well as in their daily wage.
- **UNPAID AND PAID 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. All AAI employees also accrue 1 hour of Paid Sick Leave for every 40 hours worked.
- **PRO DEALS AND DISCOUNTS:** All employees at the American Alpine Institute are able to purchase items in the Equipment Shop at 35% off MSRP. 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 Pro deals tend to be anywhere from 40%-60% off.

Application Process

- Complete a Wufoo application form here:
<https://alpineinstitute.wufoo.com/forms/z1t4iaja1g55gqo/>

Be sure to attach the following to your online application:

- 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?

Thank you in advance for your application and letter!

Questions? Please feel free to email Christian Schreagle at chris@alpineinstitute.com.