



Vocational Training for Outdoor Professionals



Course Catalog

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The American Alpine Institute does not and will not provide any commission, bonus or other incentive based directly or indirectly on success in securing enrollment or financial aid to any persons or entities engaged in student recruiting or admission activities or in making decisions regarding award of student financial assistance.

All training locations for VA education benefits recipients will be wholly in Washington State.

Introduction to Outdoor Professions

Imagine a situation where you get to live and work in the mountains. Imagine a situation where your desk is a belay station, where instead of writing reports and punching a time clock, you work with ice tools, skis and ropes. Imagine a situation where work travel doesn't mean non-descript hotel rooms in non-descript cities, but instead means travel to mythic places like the Alaska Range, the Rocky Mountains, the Andes...

Imagine the life of an outdoor professional. This can be a professional mountain guide, an outdoor educator, a ski patroller, a mountain rescue technician...the list goes on.

Now, imagine the reality. Working in the mountains is hard and the unpredictability of nature can be taxing. Backpacks are heavy. It's not always sunny out and the people you are surrounded by for long periods of time are not always pleasant. You may spend a lot of time away from home on multi-day trips or rescue operations; and until you establish yourself as an outdoor professional, the winter work season may be sparse. Beginning level outdoor professionals don't receive great compensation for the work that they do. And some people get tired of climbing the same routes over and over again...

But on the other hand, if you love being outside, if you love being in the mountains, if you love getting to know people from all walks of life, if you love teaching, if you relish your students' excitement as they enjoy new experiences in the mountains, if you love working with a team, then perhaps this is a career for you.

Over the last twenty-years, working as an outdoor professional in the North America and the world has grown from a fringe-type job into a real profession. To obtain employment in the outdoor realm, one must have a number of baseline skills. To make a profession out of it, one must have a high level of training, skill and keep up-to-date with certifications.

It's not the easiest profession to break into. And indeed, it is not the easiest profession in which to find year-round employment. However, with perseverance, skill and a willingness to train hard, anybody can become an outdoor professional and indeed, anybody can make a decent living working in the mountains and in the outdoors.

Employment

The jobs of outdoor professionals are extremely diverse. What career path you decide on depends on many different aspects such as your previous experience and training, the terrain you'd like to work in, the different age groups you'd like to work with, the intensity of the job, the travel requirements of the job, etc. Many outdoor professions require training certifications to be current and training programs to be taken as continuing education. Below we outline some of the employment options people have as outdoor professionals.

Mountain Guide

Some people may focus solely on the job of mountain guiding. In other words, they take people up a mountain route and then back down again, whereas others may focus on rock, ski, or expedition style guiding. It is not uncommon for a guide to focus on an area of strength and then to primarily guide in that area of strength, but some will develop their skills so that they may guide in every medium.

The more diverse one's skills are, the more guide and instructor employment opportunities there are. It is not at all uncommon for a guide to work in the Cascades or the Sierra in the summer and then to work on rock in the Desert Southwest in the winter. It is also not uncommon for one to stay in a mountainous range year-round and then to teach avalanche courses, to run ice trips or to ski guide in the winter. Others will spend their year globe hopping, working in South America, Antarctica or in Nepal.

Wages for traditional guide work vary dramatically. Most guides in the United States are paid on a per diem basis (by the day), and most will make between \$100 and \$250 a day. However, those who work for themselves may be able to make more.

The highest paying annual guide opportunity in the United States is on Denali, the tallest mountain in North America. Guides who work on Denali usually start out making approximately \$2,500 per trip, but can easily work their way up to approximately \$10,000 per trip.

Guides who have completed the highest level of certification through the American Mountain Guides Association (IFMGA Certification) have the opportunity to work in Europe. Guide wages in the Alps are significantly higher than wages in the United States. Most guides make in excess of \$350 a day. However, it is an expensive place to live and there are a lot of regulations on foreign guides.

Instructor

Like guiding, there are many different types of instructing options for outdoor professionals. There are backpacking instructors who teach students how to pack a backpack correctly, how to set up a campsite, and how to prepare for a one night or multi-night trip. At the other end of the spectrum, there are multi-day expedition style instructors who teach students how to plan, prepare and execute a very technical mountain objective. And there are many options in between those two examples. Outdoor professional instructors are very similar to guides in that the more diverse one's skills are, the more instructor employment opportunities there are.

For example, you could be a rock climbing and mountaineering instructor in the summer in the Cascades and then in the winter months instruct avalanche safety courses or instruct ice climbing courses. With the proper training and prerequisites, instructors can also teach Wilderness First Responder courses or Leave No Trace Training courses.

In many cases, being a guide and being an instructor are seen as synonymous professions.

The preceding are all considered traditional options for the outdoor professional. However, there are a handful of options that are both "outside-the-box" and are perhaps even more common than the traditional options. Following is a breakdown of these different options for outdoor professionals:

University Programs

There are two types of university programs. The first are University Outdoor Pursuits Programs. And the second are University Outdoor Recreation Programs.

Outdoor Pursuit programs are usually student funded on-campus organizations that develop outdoor adventure programs for students. Some of the programs they develop are climbing and skiing related, but many others may relate to backpacking, kayaking, or river rafting. Most outdoor pursuits programs have a non-student employee who has well-rounded outdoor skills, trainings and certifications overseeing a staff of student instructors and guides.

University Outdoor Recreation programs are degree programs in outdoor education. Professors tend to have master's degrees or PhDs in outdoor education or in experiential learning. As all students in these programs are exposed to climbing, highly trained, skilled and certified professors are in high demand.

The advantage to working for a university program – either in pursuits or in recreation – is that these tend to be stable jobs with benefits. They often also provide one the opportunity to take time off to participate in traditional mountain guiding activities during school breaks.

Salaries for those who run outdoor pursuits programs range from \$30,000 to \$55,000 a year, where professors in outdoor recreation programs can expect to make between \$35,000 and \$70,000 a year.

Military Recreation Programs

Military recreation programs are quite similar to University Outdoor Pursuits programs. The main difference is that these programs exist to provide recreation opportunities for military personnel as well as their families on and around military bases.

Civilian employees with a wide array of outdoor training, skills and certificates commonly run military recreation programs. These programs generally provide year-round employment and benefits.

Salaries for Military Recreation program personnel are on the NF pay scale. NF stands for non-appropriated funds. These salaries vary dramatically. Those at the very bottom of the scale make approximately \$25,000 a year. However, those at the very top can make up to \$144,000 a year.

Private School Recreation Programs

Private schools run the gamut from small, underfunded parochial schools, to large well-funded boarding schools. Employment can include anything from extreme part-time work, to full-time, year-round employment.

The needs at these schools are as variable as the employment. Some schools may be looking for an individual who can develop a variety of outdoor programs, whereas others may be looking specifically for a climbing, mountaineering or ski program coordinator. Some may want to bring someone in to run a single trip, whereas others may want someone to come in full-time.

As there is no standard model for these programs, it would be difficult to pinpoint a salary. But it would be reasonable to assume that an inner-city parochial school will not be able to pay anywhere near what a high-end college prep school might be able to pay. Full-time instructors at parochial schools make between \$18,000 and \$40,000 a year. A full-time instructor at an independent college prep school averages between \$50,000 and \$90,000 a year. A small parochial school that wants to get their kids outside for a day may pay \$100 for an instructor to oversee twenty students. Whereas a prep school might pay \$1000 for the exact same thing...

Employment in the private school sector will require a lot of self-reliance and all of your negotiating abilities as well as your trainings and certificates.

Wilderness Therapy

The following definition from an article by Michael Conner published at Princeton Online provides one of the best definitions of wilderness therapy:

Wilderness therapy is an experiential program that takes place in a wilderness or remote outdoor setting. Programs provide counseling, therapy, education, leadership training and primitive living challenges that foster community and group interdependence as well as individual honesty, awareness, openness, responsibility and accountability.

Sometimes referred to as “hoods-in-the-woods” programs, wilderness therapy is used to help teenagers and adults with significant behavior problems to overcome negative attitudes through adventure and reconnect with their families and community in a positive way.

Many wilderness therapy programs employ individuals who are highly trained and certified and who can effectively run mountaineering, skiing, rock climbing or ice climbing programs. Those who work in

wilderness therapy must be exceedingly patient and must be willing to put up with some level of abuse from the participants.

Wilderness therapy programs tend to pay instructors by the day, much like traditional guide work. Most instructors make between \$150 and \$200 a day. Food and lodging while in the field are commonly included.

Youth Camp Programs and Youth Adventure Programs

Boy Scout camp, Girl Scout camp, YMCA, religious camp, academic camp, band camp, day camp, overnight camp, multi-day and multi-location adventure programs, the sky's the limit...most camp programs have an adventure contingent and many employ a climbing specific instructor or outdoor educator. Most adventure programs have two or three co-instructors for a group of teenagers or adolescents and the instructors take the group on multi-adventure experiences throughout the country or the world. The camp staff and instructors are required to have experience in many different types of terrain and at least a current Wilderness First Responder certificate.

The downside is that most of these programs only run during the summer months and instructor pay can be low. The upside is that these places are a great place to get your feet wet and to begin to build your professional instructor resume.

Summer camp salaries as well as adventure program salaries are commonly lump sum. Most instructors will make between \$2,000 and \$4,000 for the summer season depending on certifications and experiences. Food and lodging are commonly included.

Not-For-Profit Outdoor Programs

The two most popular not-for-profit outdoor programs are Outward Bound and the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). The mission of these two schools, and most of those that are like them, is to provide participants with a robust and well-rounded outdoor education.

There are a number of other outdoor not-for-profits that focus on the use of outdoor adventure education to accomplish a different goal. Some focus on religious studies, whereas others focus on the development of community.

Salaries for these types of programs tend to be built on the traditional guide and instructor day model. Most not-pro-profit outdoor programs require their employees to have extensive training in different mediums as well as current certifications. Most not-for-profit guides make between \$75 and \$150 a day. Food and lodging while in the field are commonly included.

The daily wage may seem low; however, some programs provide an opportunity to work in a year-round environment with some field-time and some supplemental office work. Those who commit to such programs for the long haul often see their wages continue to rise. Many people support their families and make their careers at not-for-profit outdoor programs.

National Park Institutes

Many national parks have non-profit organizations that are located within them. These field institutes tend to approach each park's unique resources from an educational perspective. Following is a quote from the NPS website on their institutes and field schools:

National Park institutes and field schools share one key characteristic: they all provide in-depth education for small groups in natural and historic settings. Instructors draw upon their expertise as professional scientists, authors, historians, artists, and adventurers to unravel the intricacies of

our national parks. Courses range from one-day field seminars to multi-day backcountry experiences.

Many institutes have a field contingent to their programs. Some of these have climbing related programs that will require experience, training and certifications like the Single Pitch Instructor course.

Guides are generally paid between \$100 and \$150 per day. Food and lodging are often provided, but not always.

Rock Climbing Gym Outdoor Programs

Many rock climbing gyms have small outdoor climbing programs. Generally, gym employees work these programs. Some gyms pay an hourly rate of \$10-\$20 an hour, whereas others pay a daily guide rate of anywhere from \$100-\$200 a day. These require a Single Pitch Instructor course completion certification and those that take participants outside must have a Wilderness First Responder certification.

Climbing/Backcountry Ranger

National Parks, National Forests, BLM Lands, and even some State Parks all have backcountry rangers. Some places, like Yosemite, Joshua Tree, Mount Rainier and Denali, have a climbing specific ranger staff. Most of these jobs are seasonal, but a handful of them are year-round.

Obviously, these jobs do not involve directly guiding people or direct involvement in instruction. Most of the work that these individuals do revolves around educating the climbing and backcountry communities. Some of these jobs also include elements of search and rescue.

There are a number of different agencies and each one pays somewhat differently. However, most backcountry rangers will make between \$25,000 and \$35,000 a year. As these tend to be government jobs, the benefits for year-round employees are quite good.

Professional Search and Rescue

Volunteers do the vast majority of the search and rescue (SAR) in the United States. Some police departments have professional search and rescue personnel. Most of those who work in these specialized units are former members of police SWAT teams. Professional SAR teams are common in places where large cities sit up against wilderness.

Some professional SAR programs have an advisor that comes from the guide world. Indeed, there are a few companies that focus specifically on teaching high-angle and mountain rescue techniques to police and fire personnel.

Yosemite Search and Rescue is one of the few professional SAR programs that hires highly trained and skilled climbers over those with a police or SWAT background. Most of the YOSAR employees are well versed in big wall and aid climbing as well as in mountain rescue techniques. As the YOSAR staff is small, it is extremely prestigious to be selected to be on their crew.

Working as a SAR professional for a police department requires a handful of years working as a police officer before becoming a SAR professional. As a result, most of these individuals make approximately \$60,000 a year.

Those who consult for police departments or for volunteer SAR programs make a variety of different rates and one's ability to negotiate is paramount.

Those who teach SAR and high angle rescue courses tend to be paid just like tradition guides on a daily basis, with pay averaging between \$150 and \$350 a day. Some programs provide a food and lodging stipend while instructors are in the field.

YOSAR provides free housing to its employees and significant discounts on local food. Members are only paid when they are in training or are actively working on a mission. Pay averages between \$23 and \$34 an hour.

Outdoor Administration

As the outdoor industry grows, more and more companies are hiring administrative employees that have previous outdoor experience, trainings and certifications. Like in most industries, it is attractive to employers that prospective employees have previous experience in what their company provides. Many outdoor professionals start their careers in office administrative work since they have first-hand knowledge, background and real-life experiences to provide customers, students and clients with a clear understanding of what the company offers.

Every outdoor company is different in regards to what they find as valuable assets for their employees to have. But one thing all outdoor companies have in common is that they want to see their employees enjoy time in the outdoors and that their employees have a desire to grow their knowledge and experience in the outdoors. The programs below offer these types of trainings.

Outdoor administration positions usually run year-round and pay averages between \$23,000 to \$40,000.

Other Options

Many people work a traditional guide job throughout the summer season and then supplement that work with one of the many options listed above. Some may also include teaching Wilderness First Responder first aid classes or work as a ski patrol which requires avalanche safety and a skiing at an advanced level. Some people may choose to be mountain rescue technicians. Others supplement their income by teaching school, writing outdoor related articles, or selling photographs from their trips. And some even develop sponsorship deals with gear and equipment manufacturers.

About the American Alpine Institute

Mission:

To provide world-class mountain education, exceptional guided experiences, and to inspire natural preservation.

Climbing, mountaineering and skiing provide us with something special. These activities take us to wild places and allow us to test ourselves against both nature and our own abilities. They provide us with a journey to a summit where friendship, challenge and skill intermingle to create personal growth. And they also give us insight into the value of wild places and mountain cultures throughout the world. They allow us a reason to become stewards and preservationists. The experiences that come from these activities can make people better...

The American Alpine Institute strives to provide students with the skills they need to independently access the mountains, to employ the most modern travel and climbing techniques, to understand the hazards associated with mountain travel, to develop the most progressive self-rescue skills available, to accept the serious responsibility of mountain partnerships, to understand mountain environments and the threats to them, and to develop preservationist attitudes, so that the mountains are there for generations to come. We strive for this because we believe that the mountains and the activities that we engage in within them allow people to grow, both in the way that they view themselves, as well as in the way that they view the world...

The American Alpine Institute was founded in 1975, and since then has held a singular focus on the mountain education of climbers, mountaineers, backcountry skiers, mountain rescue personnel, outdoor educators and guides. Throughout the time that the company has been in existence, the Institute has fashioned itself as first, a climbing school; second, as a guide service; and third as an advocate for land stewardship and preservation.

Most guide services have developed a model that insulates their guests from the reality of the mountains. They are in the business of creating return guests dependent on them to access their adventures. The Institute is in the business of developing independent self-sufficient and environmentally savvy climbers that will eventually graduate from the need of a guide.

The climbing school has two major areas of focus. First, students are provided opportunities to practice every aspect of the discipline they are studying. And second, they are educated in stewardship and preservation. As such, every program attempts to provide students with opportunities to:

- plan tours and/or climbs, including appropriate food and equipment.
- develop personal navigation skills with an emphasis on the skills needed for the area where a course was taken.
- develop hard technical climbing and/or skiing skills.
- develop good judgment of terrain and objective hazards.
- advance climbing and/or skiing movements skills through coaching from instructors.
- develop self-rescue skills.
- advance the skills required for efficiency of movement.
- Integrate specific technical climbing skills with general goals and objectives to facilitate efficient, secure, and self-dependent climbing and/or skiing.
- develop an understanding of the geology and history of an area.
- develop an understanding of alpine ecology.
- practice Leave No Trace techniques in travel, camping, climbing and skiing.

- develop and understanding and acceptance of climbing and mountaineering ethics.

When we guide people in mountainous environments, we still employ many of the teaching elements enumerated above. All of our guides are instructors first, so even when people are engaged in guided ascents, they continue to develop mountain knowledge, skills and preservationist attitudes.

Finally, the staff at the Institute is deeply concerned about threats to wild places. These include both existential threats like anthropogenic climate change or massive housing developments near climbing areas, as well as more manageable threats like trail-braiding or human waste in the backcountry. The staff at the Institute has been involved in many different efforts to advocate for wilderness, mountain culture and preservation over the years. And we plan to continue to engage in these efforts for the foreseeable future.

The Institute is a patron or supporting member of the following organizations:

Conservation Alliance

A consortium of 70 predominantly outdoor equipment manufacturers who provide grants to grassroots environmental groups.

High Country News

The Research Fund arm of HCN allows writers to delve more deeply into environmental issues in the West.

Leave No Trace

This organization teaches backcountry ethics to all user groups. They publish the widely used and highly regarded Leave No Trace booklets.

National Audubon Society

Promotes the study and conservation of birds and other wildlife, their habitat, and the environment, as well as teaching, and advocating for environmental policy.

The Nature Conservancy

Nationally recognized habitat conservation group.

The North Cascades Institute

The Northwest's premier environmental education organization focusing on natural and cultural history.

Oregon Natural Resources Council

Conservation consortium promoting environmental protection by educating the public and influencing public servants via legal and legislative process.

People for Puget Sound

Educates and involves people in protecting and restoring the lands and waters of Puget Sound

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Council

Dedicated to outdoor recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat, and natural areas in Washington.

Whatcom Land Trust

Preserves and protects wildlife habitat, scenic, & agricultural land, and open space in Whatcom County for future generations.

Southern Nevada Climbers Coalition

Preserves and protects the climbing resources in the greater Las Vegas area, with a focus on protecting the world-famous climbing found in Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.

Washington Climbers Coalition

The mission of the WCC is threefold. First, to get climbers involved in discussion of issues related to climbing area management and access. Second, to encourage active involvement in coordinated efforts to take care of Washington crags. And third, to maintain good relations with other recreational users and land managers or owners.

Northwest Avalanche Center

The Northwest Weather and Avalanche Center (NWAC) promotes safety by helping reduce the impacts of avalanches and adverse mountain weather on recreation, industry and transportation in Washington, and northern Oregon through data collection, mountain weather, avalanche forecasting and education.

Bellingham Mountain Rescue Council

The BMRC is a volunteer organization dedicated to saving lives through rescue and mountain safety education based in the North Cascades.

American Alpine Institute Staff

The Institute staff is composed of some of the world's most accomplished climbers, skiers, and mountain educators. Together they have climbing, research, and expeditionary experience in every major range of the world and have one or more degrees in areas related to the physical or cultural aspects of the domestic and foreign environments in which they guide. Most commonly their academic backgrounds are in biology, ecology, geology, and outdoor education, but others hold degrees in park and forest management, medicine, geography, meteorology, writing, languages, and engineering.

In addition to extensive and very diverse personal climbing experience, they have received professional training in advanced guiding techniques and rescue. Collectively they have one of the highest levels of wilderness first aid training among the world's international guide services. All have been certified as Wilderness First Responders, Emergency Medical Technicians, or the equivalent.

Jason Martin, Executive Director, Instructor, and Guide

Jason oversees the day-to-day operations at AAI. He joined the Institute as a guide in the year 2000 and moved into an administrative position in 2008. He took over as director of the organization in 2019. In addition to his work at AAI, Jason serves on the Mt. Erie Climbing Committee for the city of Anacortes, participates in the annual Association for Outdoor Recreation and Education (AORE) conference and volunteers for the Bellingham Mountain Rescue Council. He was also on the Board of Directors for the American Mountain Guides Association for 6 years. He serves as the technical director for the annual Red Rock Rendezvous climbing festival and previously served on the Board of Directors for the Las Vegas Climbers Liaison Council. Jason has guided in Red Rock Canyon, Joshua Tree National Park, the Cascades, the Sierra, the Alaska Range, in Canada's Coast Range and in the Andes of Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru. Jason is a playwright, film critic and outdoor adventure writer. He co-authored 'Washington Ice: A Climbing Guide' and 'Rock Climbing: The AMGA Single Pitch Manual,' and authored 'Fun Climbs Red Rocks: Topropes and Moderates' and Best Climbs: Red Rocks.' AMGA Certified Rock and Alpine Guide, Leave No Trace Master Educator, Rope Rescue Technician, and International Technical Rescue Association Level 3 Rope Instructor.

Dunham Gooding, President

Since founding the Institute in 1975, Dunham has taught courses and guided climbs in the Cascades, Canada, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Patagonia and has made ascents throughout North and South America with new routes in the Cascades and first ascents in Bolivia and Alaska. He oversees program and staff development for the Institute. As US representative to the UIAGM, he was instrumental in gaining

admittance of AMGA to that international body. Over the years, Dunham has served on wilderness management and wilderness policy task forces in this country and in Chile, as chairman of the American Climbing Sports Group, chairman of the National Summit Committee on Mountain Rescue, president of the American Mountain Guides Association, and president of the Outdoor Industry Association.

Michael Powers, Assistant Director for Staff Development

Michael oversees the hiring, training, and continuing education of climbing and ski guides at the Institute and also greatly enjoys his work as an instructor and guide. Among his other assignments, he looks forward to leading AAI's trips in the French and Swiss Alps each summer. He has led programs in the Cascades, Ouray, Joshua Tree, Red Rock, Alaska, Canada, Ecuador, Chile, Argentina, France, and Switzerland. He is an IFMGA certified guide and has completed numerous rock and ice routes at a high standard in France, Switzerland, New Zealand, Nepal, Alaska, and the western U.S. He has also served as chairman of the AMGA Technical Committee and director of America's national guide certification program. Speaks French & Spanish.

James Pierson, Program Coordinator and Guide

James works with climbers on trip selection and preparation for our Cascade Programs. Although he was born in Kansas, he was bit by the Mountain Bug when he went to high school just south of Jackson Hole, WY. After college and working in Colorado as a snowboarding instructor, he moved to the Olympia area, joined the Mountaineers and started climbing. Since then he has climbed throughout Washington and Oregon, as well as ice climbing trips to Colorado, Montana and British Colombia. James also enjoys telemark skiing in the winter, stand-up paddling and fishing in the summer and speaks a little German on the side.

Wyatt Evanson, Program Coordinator and Guide

Wyatt manages our Alaska Range programs and expeditions along with the 7 Summits. After summiting Mt. Rainier for the first time he has climbed all over the Pacific Northwest and Montana. Every year, he eagerly awaits to work on his favorite mountain, Denali. He attributes his love of the outdoors to his parents and his aunt and uncle. When not climbing, he enjoys skiing, road trips and adventuring with his wife. He calls Northwest Montana home. His academic background is in political science, debate and broadcasting.

Tom Kirby, Assistant Director for IT and Marketing

Guides in the Cascades and Alaska. Tom has been climbing rock since 1980, first on crags in Virginia and New Hampshire, then eventually all over the western U.S., including the Colorado Rockies, the Tetons, and the Cascades. Along the way, he added ice climbing and backcountry skiing to his repertoire. He has worked as a software developer, a teacher, and a timber framer. He holds a BA in English, the only language he speaks fluently - though he speaks some Spanish as well. Tom is an AMGA Certified Single Pitch Instructor.

Richard Riquelme, Manager of Equipment Services and Guide

Richard manages AAI's international Guide's Choice equipment field-testing program, and he advises climbers on their selection of personal equipment for domestic and foreign programs. Richard's climbing and skiing has taken him throughout Chile, Peru, and Argentina as well as to the US, Canada, and Europe. His academic training is in metallurgical engineering. He has extensive experience in search and rescue operations. Also guides for AAI and teaches AIARE avalanche courses. Native speaker of Spanish, fluent in English, and proficient in German. AMGA Certified Single Pitch Instructor.

Sara Jung Umstead, School Certifying Official and Vocational Programs Coordinator

Sara works with students looking to use their VA education benefits to gain specific vocational training with the American Alpine Institute. She has guided in Tennessee and Washington and is an AMGA Single Pitch Instructor. She is the School Certifying Official and works with the Washington State

Workforce Board as well as the VA to ensure the vocational courses are complaint with both entities. Phone contact is 360-671-1505 and email is sara@alpineinstitute.com.

Field Staff

George Bieker, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington, Nevada, Colorado, Alaska, Arkansas, Canada and Africa. George was born and raised down south in Fayetteville, Arkansas. He has been guiding since 2010 and climbing since 2008. He holds a Masters in Higher Education and a Bachelors in Outdoor Recreation. Passions include; climbing, teaching, cosmology, writing, and health & wellness. Leave No Trace Trainer.

Sam Boyce, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington, Nevada and Canada. Sam is a Washington local. He grew up backpacking and scrambling in the Cascades. He has climbed extensively in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and in the Desert Southwest. A prolific first ascentionist, he spends his free time aid soloing big chossy towers and skiing deep powder. Sam is an AMGA Single Pitch Instructor, Rope Rescue Technician and a Leave No Trace Trainer.

Dustin Byrne, Instructor and Guide

Guides in the Cascades and Alaska. He has climbed in the Cascades, Alaska, and the Sierra. In his off time, he enjoys climbing, skiing, and writing. Dustin is also attending Western Washington University in Bellingham. He also lived in Chamonix for a year backcountry skiing and snowboarding. He is a level one AIARE instructor and AMGA Certified Single Pitch Instructor.

Chad Cochran, Instructor and Guide

Guides in the Cascades. Originally from the Eastern United States, Chad has climbed and guided throughout the lower 48 as well as traveling south to explore Argentine and Chilean Patagonia. He holds a degree in Recreation and Parks Management. Certified Leave No Trace Trainer, AMGA Certified Rock Guide.

Jared Drapala, Instructor and Guide

Jared is originally from Upstate New York and was introduced to climbing in the Adirondacks. He continued to pursue rock and ice climbing while at college in Vermont. He also led climbing trips while in college for the schools Outing Club. His personal climbing has taken him to Alaska, the Tetons, Wind Rivers, the Sierra, and various parts of the Southwest. He has a degree in Economics.

Lindsay Fixmer, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington, Alaska, California, Colorado and Nevada. Since her initiation into technical rock climbing in 1999, Lindsay has sought a nomadic lifestyle pursuing new mountainous terrain with a love of sharing amazing climbing endeavors with others. From 2000 to 2008, she spent considerable time working in the indoor climbing industry managing facilities, instructing and coaching youth competitive teams. Lindsay began guiding professionally in 2009 and is well versed in rock, ice and alpine climbing. You may find Lindsay guiding/climbing ice in the White Mountains of the Northeast, Hyalite Canyon in Montana or the CO western slope in the winter, technical peaks in the Rockies, Tetons and Cascades and rock climbing on granite, sandstone and limestone throughout renowned areas like Red Rocks and the southeastern U.S. International trips have included Aconcagua, Mexico, Southeast Asia, Canada and Iceland. AMGA Certified Rock and Alpine Guide and Leave No Trace Master Educator.

Samuel Fletcher, Instructor and Guide

Sam grew up in Washington on the Olympic Peninsula and was in the mountains at an early age. Dabbling in climbing of all forms, It wasn't until 2016 that he decided to take the plunge into guiding.

After traveling the western reaches honing his skills he returns to the PNW with a passion to climb, explore, and show others the beauty the PNW mountains have to offer.

Doug Foust, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Red Rock and Joshua Tree. Doug grew up on the beaches of Southern California and played professional beach volleyball full time for 7 years before starting a construction based business in Las Vegas. He enjoys climbing long traditional routes and sharing his passion for climbing with others. AMGA Single Pitch Instructor.

Ron Funderburke, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Colorado, Utah, Nevada and Washington. Ron Funderburke is the Education Manager at the American Alpine Club. He joins the AAI roster as a career climbing instructor, guide, and educator. He is an AMGA certified Rock Guide and the Discipline Coordinator of the AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Program. Also, Ron has co-written a handful of books on climbing and climbing instruction, including: Rock Climbing: The AMGA Single Pitch Manual, Climbing: Gym to Rock, Climbing: Protection, Climbing: Knots, Climbing: Toproping to Sport, Climbing: Sport to Trad. When Ron is not teaching climbing or guiding, he can be found teaching his sons, Burke and James, to monkey around on crags and boulders. He and his wife Mary live in Golden, Colorado.

Nate Furman, Instructor and Guide

Nate's love for climbing has taken him across the globe, from loose-rock trundlefests on Greenlandic granite to hang-dog bolt-clipping epics on the limestone of Thailand. Originally from Northern California, he's presently faculty in and Program Director of the Adventure Education Program at Green Mountain College in Poultney, Vermont. He has a PhD in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism from the University of Utah and Rock Guide certification from the AMGA.

Alejandra Garces, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington, Colorado, Utah, Nevada and Canada. Alejandra grew up climbing from a young age in Ecuador with her family and Ecuadorian Parents. Born in Michigan and a graduate from Texas Christian University, she studied Latin American Ethnohistory and Archaeology where she made many trips back to South and Central America trekking, climbing, and excavating in Peru, Ecuador, Costa Rica, and Colombia. Alejandra has enjoyed climbing rock, water ice, mixed, alpine, trekking, and canyoning all across the US and the South American Andes since 2011. Her guiding career began in Colorado where she worked as an Outdoor School Instructor for REI and as a guide in Utah with the Grand Classroom. She also spent time volunteer guiding with at-risk youth in the Denver Area. AMGA Certified Single Pitch Instructor. Bi-lingual in Spanish and English, Leave No Trace Trainer.

Ben Gardner, Instructor and Guide

Ben first started working as a climbing guide about a decade ago while living in Durango, Colorado. Since then he has worked throughout the US. Ben spent seven years working for Outward Bound in North Carolina, the Florida Everglades, and Patagonia. As an instructor and climbing specialist he ran wilderness courses ranging from 2 to 72 days in length. In 2008, Ben became the Chief Climbing Instructor at the North Carolina School and for three years, he directed all aspects of the climbing and high ropes programs, including all technical training for staff. He currently spends the summers guiding in the Cascades, the spring and fall climbing rock throughout the West, and his winters ice climbing and skiing in Colorado. Ben is an AMGA Single Pitch Instructor and aspirant Rock Guide

Higinio Gonzalez, Instructor and Guide

Guides in the Cascades, Red Rock, and Alaska and previously guided Antarctica, Chile, Peru, and Pakistan. Quino summited Broad Peak and Gasherbrum I in Pakistan and has climbed extensively in Canada, Alaska, Patagonia, the Himalayas, and the United States. He guides in rock, alpine, and ski terrain and specializes in technical ice and mixed ascents. Certified AMGA Rock Guide. Academic background in journalism, graduate degree in political science, certified translator. Speaks Spanish and French.

Will Gordon, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington, California, Nevada and Canada. Will is originally from the Southeast, but has lived in Colorado for most of the past decade. He has climbed extensively throughout the Rockies and the Desert Southwest. In the winters, he works as a ski patroller in Breckenridge, CO. Leave No Trace Trainer, AMGA Certified Single Pitch Instructor and Certified Rock Instructor.

Katie Griffith, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington, Utah, Colorado, Nevada and Canada. Lindsey brings a vast amount of experience to the Alpine Institute table. She has worked in the rock, alpine, ice and ski industry since 2015 previously with Kling Mountain Guides and Telluride Ski Resort. Lindsey is actively working towards her IFMGA pin and has taken several AMGA guide training courses. She was awarded the 2016 GORE-TEX Scholarship and the 2016 Arcteryx Mentor Camp through the American Mountain Guide Association. During her free-time you can find Lindsey rock climbing, skiing or ice climbing with her friends throughout the Western United States. Leave No Trace Trainer.

Joshua Harris, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington. Josh grew up in New Orleans, where the flatness and heat instilled in him a drive to explore snowy mountains. His adventures since have taken him from the White Mountains, to the Tetons, Sierras, and to Patagonia's Southern Icefield. He worked as a guide and instructor for Outward Bound for eight years in North Carolina and Patagonia. Josh has a Masters in Teaching, and he loves to teach and share the experience of being in the mountains with others. He is pursuing AMGA Alpine Guide Certification, and now calls Seattle home.

Angela Henderson, Instructor and Guide

Guides in the Washington, California, Nevada, and Canada. Originally from Southeast Alaska, Angela spent several years climbing and teaching outdoor education throughout California and Colorado for Outward Bound and other schools. She has also spent the winters traveling internationally to climbing destinations in South America, Southeast Asia, and Mexico. She holds a degree in Exercise Science with a minor in Spanish. Leave No Trace Trainer and Rope Rescue Technician.

Karl Henize, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington, California, Nevada and Canada. Originally from New England, Karl initially discovered his lifelong passion for the mountains in the White Mountains of New Hampshire and honed his skills in the Canadian Rockies. He has climbed in many locations across the world, including: Canada, France, New Zealand, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Kyrgyzstan, and the US. Karl has a penchant for mixed (rock and ice) climbing and prefers to venture out on the paths less travelled. Leave No Trace Trainer.

Julie Ann Holder, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington. From the heart of Atlanta, Georgia, Julie Ann first discovered her passion for the outdoors in scaling the sandstone cliffs of the Southeastern U.S. She has since sharpened her climbing and instructing skills on rock, snow, and glaciers, from as far north as Alaska to the far southern border of the Peruvian Andes. Julie Ann's playful enthusiasm and focused determination are immediately evident in her infectious smile and boundless motivation, regardless of the situation. Currently based out of Bozeman, Montana, she spends her winters ski patrolling the steep chutes and rocky flanks of Big Sky's Lone Mountain. BA in Outdoor Experiential Education. AMGA Single Pitch Instructor, Wilderness EMT, AAA Avalanche Level One. Speaks Spanish and English. Leave No Trace Trainer.

Paul Ivaska, Instructor and Guide

Guides in the Cascades, Sierra, Red Rock, Alaska, and Canada. Paul has enjoyed numerous routes in the Cascades, Colorado Rockies, and the Sierra. He works as a ski instructor in the winter in Telluride, CO. Paul's formal education is in the medical field, and he worked for many years as a medic for the US military. Paul also enjoys ski mountaineering and ski touring. Speaks Lithuanian and Russian.

Steve Johnson, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Colorado, Nevada, Alaska, Utah, California and Washington. Whether he's working or playing, Steve's fun and energetic ways become immediately apparent. His climbing obsession shows in the amount of time he spends in Rocky Mountain National Park, particularly on the Diamond. Steve started climbing in 1992 and began his guiding career in 1996, drawn by the allure of sharing his passion with others. In addition to extensive climbing and guiding throughout the United States, he has also spent time in France, Italy, Switzerland, Mexico and Ecuador. And though he regularly travels to guide and climb, he always comes back to his home in the Colorado Front Range, a place where he has extensive experience. In addition to working as a guide, Steve is a Certified Massage Therapist. He graduated with honors from the Boulder College of Massage Therapy, and started an in-patient massage therapy program at Boulder Community Hospital for which he received an award recognizing his outstanding community service. Leave No Trace Trainer.

Elias Jordan, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington, California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado and Canada. Elias has been instructing climbers since 2012. He studied Astrophysics at the University of Arizona and lived throughout the Desert Southwest before moving to Mazama, Washington. Prior to joining the Institute, he worked as an Ice Farmer for the Ouray Ice Park and as a youth climbing coach. Elias is an AMGA Certified Single Pitch Instructor and LNT Master Educator.

Stephen Karney, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington, California, Nevada and Canada. Steve has climbed and guided in the Alaska Range, the Waddington Range, the Bugaboos, the Sierra Nevada, Red Rock, and other locations. In his free time, he also enjoys backcountry skiing, kiteboarding, freediving, and spearfishing.

Parker Kempf, Instructor and Guide

Guides in North Carolina, California, Washington. Born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia, Parker has spent the last 14 years of his life climbing rock, ice and snow all over the world. He has taken the AMGA SPI, Rock Guide, and Ice Instructor courses with plans to further his training in all disciplines. He enjoys epically long runs, big link-ups, and cragging with his crusher wife Julia and his 2 Chihuahuas, Zoe and Sam. If you are ever low on stoke, he has plenty to go around.

Zak Krenzer, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington, Nevada, Alaska and Canada. A Pacific Northwest native, Zak found climbing in 2012 after leaving the U.S. Army and returning to Washington State. Zak has climbed glaciated peaks in the Cascades, splitter hand cracks in the Utah Desert, golden granite in the Sierra, Ice in Hyalite Canyon and is always looking forward to the next big trip. Zak is a Rope Rescue Technician and a Leave No Trace Trainer.

Tad McCrea, Instructor and Guide

Guides in the Cascades and Alaska. Tad's passion for adventure has taken him throughout the Cascades, Sierra, Wind River, and Bugaboo Ranges. In the winter, he pursues ice and mixed climbing in southwestern Colorado as well as splitter sandstone towers of the desert Southwest. An accomplished athlete, Tad was a varsity rower and national champion at the University of Washington where he studied geography

Ian McEleney, Instructor and Guide

Guides in the Cascades, Sierra, Red Rock, and Joshua Tree. Ian has climbed throughout the United States including rock, water ice, alpine, and big wall ascents. His academic training is in Elementary Education and History. He is a Leave No Trace Trainer.

Kevin McGarity, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington, Colorado, Utah, Nevada and Canada. Kevin grew up in Columbus, Ohio where he graduated from Ohio Dominican University with a BA in History. After graduating he moved to Steamboat Springs, Colorado, where he began climbing and skiing throughout the region. While in Steamboat, Kevin worked as a youth mentor, environmental educator and climbing retail buyer, while starting his guiding career with Rocky Mountain Ventures.

Jim Mediatore, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington, California, Nevada, Alaska and Canada. Jim began to climb in 1992, and since then the sport has taken him all over the US and beyond- to the Alps, Alaska, Patagonia, Mexico, Argentina, Ecuador, Peru, and Norway. Jim is an MIT-trained biologist with a passion for travel, teaching, Scrabble, and finding new ways to tease his nephews. AMGA-certified Rock Instructor and Rope Rescue Technician. Speaks English and Spanish.

Jenny Merian, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington and Canada. Jenny discovered climbing on the stunning granite cliffs of the Maine coast and began her guiding career there in 2013. She holds a BA in Anthropology and a MS in Kinesiology. While earning her degrees, Jenny led extended climbing and backpacking trips for her university's adventure program. Her personal and professional outdoor pursuits have taken her across the US as well as to South America, Mexico, and New Zealand.

Calvin Morris, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington, Alaska, Nevada, California and Canada. Calvin fell in love with climbing during his first road trip to Red Rock Canyon many years ago. Shortly thereafter he made outdoor education and guiding his career. Calvin has worked in the field for over a decade, running programs for Outward Bound in North Carolina and Patagonia. His love for climbing has taken him all over the United States and Mexico, with several trips to Patagonia sprinkled in between. He works as a ski instructor in Lake Tahoe during the winter.

Paul Nicolazzo, First Aid and Wilderness Responder Instructor

A climber, skier, canyoneer, and paddler with numerous first ascents and descents in his resume. Paul manages the Wilderness First Responder programs. Additionally, Paul works part-time as an outdoor program risk management consultant and is a member of the WFA and WFR Scope of Practice writing group.

Cliff Palmer, Instructor and Guide

Cliff has been a professional alpine guide and outdoor educator for over 17 years. He has guided trips in Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Canada, U.S., Mexico, France, Spain, and Switzerland. Cliff is a certified AIARE Level I and Level II avalanche instructor. Cliff holds a master's degree in biology. Speaks Spanish and French.

Jodi Redfield, Instructor and Guide

Jodi grew up in the mountains of Montana and has developed a love for wild places, deep snow and alpine granite. She volunteers with the local mountain rescue unit, loves to trail run and cook. She spends her winters teaching avalanche education and guiding backcountry skiers.

Aaron Richards, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington, California, Nevada and Canada. Before joining AAI, Aaron spent many years guiding and climbing in California's Sierra Nevada, where he completed significant link-ups of big alpine rock routes. He has also skied and climbed in Alberta, British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, Utah and Alaska. Aaron grew up in Oregon, has a degree in botany, and has played professional ultimate Frisbee. He's an AMGA certified rock guide, and an AIARE level I instructor.

Dave Richards, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington, Nevada and Canada. Originally from North Idaho, Dave grew up hiking, skiing, and playing in the mountains of Idaho and Montana. Dave has climbed in many locations across the US and Canada, from the granite of Maine to the sandstone of the southwest. With a passion for teaching and helping new climbers, Dave has taught community oriented climbing programs since 1999 and spent several years coaching a youth climbing team. With an accomplished resume as a sound engineer for film, tv, and music, Dave loves splitting his time between sound work and the mountains, whether that's climbing, hiking, or ski touring. EMT and National Ski Patrol Member.

Michael Riley, Instructor and Guide

Mike began his outdoor education and guiding careers a decade ago, and he has worked for NOLS, Prescott College's adventure education program, and multiple guide services in the Southwestern United States. His climbing adventures have taken him across the Western United States and to the Ecuadorian Andes, with ascents in the Cascades, Rockies, Tetons, Sierra, and across the desert Southwest. His academic background is in adventure education. When not climbing, Mike is pursuing a PhD in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism from the University of Utah. Leave no Trace Master Educator.

Paul Rosser, Instructor and Guide

Guides in the Cascades, Red Rock and Alaska. Paul's passion for adventure has led him to climb, guide, and teach mountaineering extensively throughout North America. His instructing and guiding for AAI has included Special Operations forces and Marine Corps mountain warfare instructors in both the North Cascades and on Denali. After years of guiding, Paul served as AAI's Operations Manager until he was deployed to the Horn of Africa and Iraq following the 9/11 attacks, and in the decade that followed, he guided part time between deployments. Now, as a senior officer in the US Army Reserve, Colonel Rosser serves as adjunct instructor to the US Joint Special Operations University and in his civilian capacity, he again works as mountain guide with the Institute. From youth climbers, to intermediate alpinists, to seasoned veterans, Paul enjoys teaching leadership skills as well as climbing and rescue techniques at all skill levels.

Britt Ruegger, Instructor and Guide

Britt guides in Washington, Nevada, Colorado, California, Alaska and Canada. He began as a ski guide in Colorado in 2007 and has since transitioned into rock, alpine and ice. A Level I AIARE course leader and level II instructor, Britt is an AMGA ski aspirant and has completed the AMGA rock instructor course. He has led personal ski trips to the Cordillera Blanca in Peru and the Lakes Region Volcanoes of Chile and Argentina. He has a bachelor of arts in literature; his hobbies include practicing Spanish, playing music, and surfing.

Katlynn Schauberg, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington, California, Nevada, Alaska and Canada. Katlynn grew up in Bellingham, WA and holds a bachelors of arts degree in Environmental Education from Huxley College. Katlynn started guiding in 2012 on Mt. St. Helens and has since instructed and guided with numerous outdoor schools including with Outward Bound in the Rockies, the Cascades and in the Southwest Desert. Katlynn spends her winters as a Mountain Host with Alpine Lakes High Camp and autumns big walling in Yosemite Valley. Leave No Trace Trainer.

Kevin Shon, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington, Nevada, New Hampshire, and North Carolina. Kevin comes to AAI with a strong background in teaching, having both managed university outdoor leadership programs for several years and working for the North Carolina Outward Bound School. Kevin has been guiding since 2009, and climbing since the late 90s. He is passionate about mountaineering and mobility as well as helping people increase their potential in the mountains. Other interests include: playing music, mind/body health and wellness, spending time with old friends in Patagonia and other international travel. Although originally from the Washington D.C area, Kevin now calls Deming, Washington home.

Andy Stephen, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington, Nevada, California, Utah, Alaska and Canada. Andy is a talented climber with numerous ascents in the Cascades, High Sierra, and the desert Southwest. While his real passion is climbing, he is also a skilled guitarist and has been skiing since the age of 3. Leave No Trace Trainer.

Jacqueline Thompson, Instructor and Guide

Jacky has an infatuation with wild places. Based in the southwest, she spends most of her time rock climbing, trail and ultra running, and exploring mountains and canyons in any way possible. With a degree in Environmental Studies and Outdoor Education and Leadership, her passions lie in improving human and environmental health through reconnecting others with the wild— and having a lot of fun along the way. During the off-season, Jacky is also a writer and yoga teacher. When she is not frolicking around in the backcountry, she can be found singing and playing music, cooking yummy food, and creating all sorts of herbal and medicinal concoctions in her home apothecary.

Alasdair Turner, Instructor and Guide

Guides in the Cascades, Red Rock, Alaska, Canada, and Bolivia. A Scotsman by birth, Alasdair has climbed in the Washington Cascades for the last 15 years where, among his long list of achievements, he notched the first winter ascent of the Serpentine Arête on Dragontail Peak. Alasdair has ventured onto big walls and into mountain ranges outside Washington as well, making difficult ascents throughout Canada, Alaska, Wyoming, California, and Utah. His degree is in Chemistry. He is an AMGA Certified Rock Guide.

Samantha Weichert, Instructor and Guide

Raised in New Zealand, Samantha moved to the United States and learned to climb and ski in Washington State. Not long after that, she turned her passion into a career. She enjoys a bit of everything in the mountains, from single pitch sport, to long days on big routes. In addition to working as a climbing guide, Samantha also works as a ski patroller in the winter months.

Seth White, Instructor and Guide

Guides in Washington, Nevada and Canada. Seth grew up in the Pacific Northwest and developed a love for spending time in the mountains early on in life. He has guided, climbed, and skied in many locations all over the world including the Cascades, Alaska, Canada, Chile, Argentina, and Spain. His deep love for the mountains is what drives his passion to share it with others and is what makes him feel alive! Leave No Trace Trainer and WEA Certified Outdoor Leader.

Andrew Yasso, Instructor, and Guide

Guides in Red Rock, the Cascades, Canada and Alaska, as well as coordinates our Alaska Climbing Programs. Andrew grew up in Hong Kong and was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to travel. He has a degree in Outdoor Recreation and began climbing when he started college. Besides climbing, Andrew is a passionate table tennis player. He has taken his Level I and II AIARE Avalanche Courses, is a Wilderness First Responder and an AMGA Certified Single Pitch Instructor. Andrew has climbed in many locations throughout the United States, and has also spent time climbing in the Bugaboos, Canadian Rockies, and Squamish in British Columbia.

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American Alpine Institute Programs and Facilities

The American Alpine Institutes administrative offices are located at:

1515 12th Street
Bellingham, WA 98225

Courses are hands on experiential field training programs and are run in the mountains, at the cliffs and on the glaciers where AAI is approved to provide instruction. The American Alpine Institute is an authorized National Park Service Concessionaire and operates under concession permits, commercial use authorizations and special use permits in the following parks and forests:

Denali, Wrangle-St. Elias, North Cascades, Mount Rainier, Sequoia and Kings Canyon, Joshua Tree, Rocky Mountain National Parks; Inyo, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie, Gifford-Pinchot, Uncompahgre, and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests; Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area; Moab and Monticello BLM Lands; Stawamus Chief, Murrin and Bugaboo Glacier Provincial Parks.

Courses that run in the Pacific Northwest meet at our equipment and rental shop in Bellingham at 7am on the first day of the program. The instructors meticulously go through each person's equipment and students are given the opportunity to complete rentals or make any last-minute purchases. When this is finished, the instructors will escort the group into the mountains where the bulk of the course will be taught.

Students receiving VA education benefits may train outside of Washington, but those programs will not be certified to the VA for reimbursement.

Most programs require students to provide their own personal camping and climbing gear. Students will also be required to provide their own food for the duration of the programs. The Institute will provide transportation to and from program areas for all group courses (with the exception of the SPI program, WFR and avalanche courses), will provide group-climbing gear, and will cover all the costs of land use permits.

Each course has its own equipment list. However, a sample equipment list has been included here in Appendix B.

Instructor to student ratios vary by program. Following is a breakdown of the ratios and class sizes that participants should expect:

Course	Number of Students	Instructor	Total Student to Instructor Ratio
• Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part I	5	1	10:2
• Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part II	3	1	9:3
• Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part III	2	1	6:3
• Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part IV	2-4	1	6:3-8:2
• Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue	5	1	10:2
• Alpine Ice Climbing Introduction	2-6	1	6:1-2:1
• Alpinism 1: Introduction to Mountaineering	5	1	10:2
• Alpinism 2: Intermediate Mountaineering	3-6	1	3:1-6:2
• Wilderness First Responder Certification Course	9	1	18:2
• Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator	9	1	18:2
• AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course	6	1	12:2
• Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive	5	1	10:2
• Leave No Trace Trainer	10	1	10:1
• Leave No Trace Master Educator	5	1	10:2
• Avalanche Level I & Rescue	4	1	16:4
• Avalanche Pro Level I	5	1	10:2
• AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Exam	6	1	12:2
• AMGA Alpine Skills Course	4	1	8:2
• AMGA Rock Guide Course	3	1	12:4

- AMGA Alpine Guide Course 3 1 12:4
- AMGA Ski Guides Course 4 1 12:3

The Wilderness First Responder program, Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator, Avalanche programs, and the Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive all have some combination of classroom and field time. The standard classroom space is approximately 500 square feet. However, occasionally the Institute rents larger conference room style spaces nearby for bigger classes.

About AAI's Vocational Training for Outdoor Professionals

The American Alpine Institute has certain programs that are vocational in nature and are designed to fill in education and certificate gaps outdoor professionals might have as climbers, mountaineers, ski patrollers, mountain rescue technicians, outdoor educators, office administrators, instructors, guides, etc. Each course can be taken as a stand-alone program. Many outdoor professions require certifications and continuing education trainings to remain current while employed.

These vocational programs can be taken as needed to advance one's career in the mountains and to build a professional resume. As these are stand-alone programs, there is no course flow or sequence in which they need to be completed. For example, if you attend our 12-day Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part I course, there is not a deadline or limiting date to complete the 12-day Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part II course. Likewise, if you need the Avalanche Pro Level I training and you meet the prerequisites, you can take that course alone.

As long as the prerequisites are met, students can take these programs as needed for job requirements and gain new skills that are new to the outdoor industry due to changes in the industry.

Every student will need to meet the prerequisites of any course they wish to enroll in and will need to provide an outdoor resume that outlines previous training, experience, and certifications.

Prior education and training will be reviewed for all students and VA education benefits recipients entering any vocational program.

Please note that VA education benefits cannot be used for refresher training to repeat learning of the same skills.

Credentials Awarded

You will be awarded the following credentials based on the vocational program(s) you choose to take:

- Leave No Trace Trainer Certificate
- Leave No Trace Master Educator Certificate
- Avalanche Level I and Rescue Skills Completion Certificate
- Avalanche Pro Level I Certificate
- Wilderness First Responder Certificate
- AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course Completion Certificate
- AMGA Alpine Skills Course Completion Certificate
- AMGA Alpine Guide Course Completion Certificate
- AMGA Rock Guide Course Completion Certificate
- AMGA Ski Guide Course Certificate
- Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part I Completion Certificate
- Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part II Completion Certificate
- Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part III Completion Certificate
- Alpine Mountaineering Expedition Leadership Certificate
- Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue Course Completion Certificate
- Alpine Ice Climbing Course Completion Certificate
- Introduction to Alpinism Course Completion Certificate
- Intermediate Alpinism Course Completion Certificate
- Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive Certificate
- Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator Course Completion Certificate

Program Requirements and Hours Required

Our vocational programs have hour requirements. As this is mountaineering and climbing, the days are extremely long. Yes, there are a few programs that will have eight-hour days, but most days will be nine to twelve hours long with a few days that will be sixteen to twenty-hours long.

The Washington State Workforce Board and the Veteran's Administration require these hours to be quantified in a way that fits into a traditional school. As such, multi-day backcountry programs are given a generic 10-hours a day and front-country programs are given either an 8 or a 9-hour day.

Prior education and training will be reviewed for all students and VA education benefits recipients entering any vocational program.

Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part I (120-Hours)

This is a twelve-day program. Most days on this course are eight to ten hours in length, but there will be one or two sixteen-hour days.

Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part II (120-Hours)

This is a 12-day program. Most days on this course are eight to ten hours in length, but there will be one or two sixteen to twenty-hour days.

Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part III (120-Hours)

This is a twelve-day program. Most days on this course are eight to ten hours in length, but there will be one or two sixteen to twenty-hour days.

Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part IV (120-Hours)

This is a twelve-day program. Most days on this course are eight to ten hours in length, but there will be one or two sixteen to twenty-hour days.

Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue (30-Hours)

This is a three-day hands-on class. Most days will be ten hours in length.

Alpine Ice Climbing: Introduction (60-Hours)

This is a six-day comprehensive program. Most days will be ten hours in length.

Alpinism 1: Introduction to Mountaineering (60-Hours)

This is a six-day program. Most days will be ten hours in length.

Alpinism 2: Intermediate Mountaineering (60-Hours)

This is a six-day program. Most days will be ten hours in length.

Wilderness First Responder Certification Course (80-Hours)

This is a nine-day program. Most days on this course are eight to nine hours long.

AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course (27-Hours)

This is a three-day course. Most days on this course are nine hours long.

Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator (40-Hours)

This is a five-day program. The days will be eight-hours long.

Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive (140-Hours)

This is a 15-day long program with a day off in the middle. Most days on this course are ten hours long.

Leave No Trace Trainer (20-Hours)

This is a two-day long program. The days will be ten hours each.

Leave No Trace Master Educator (50-Hours)

This is a five-day program. The days will be ten hours each.

Avalanche Level I and Rescue Skills (32-Hours)

This is a four-day program and the days are eight hours in length.

Avalanche Pro Level I (40-Hours)

This is a five-day program and the days are eight hours in length.

AMGA Alpine Skills Course (50-Hours)

This is a five-day course and the days are ten hours in length.

AMGA Alpine Guide Course (90-Hours)

This is a nine-day course and the days are ten hours in length.

AMGA Rock Guide Course (100-Hours)

This is a ten-day course and the days are ten hours in length.

AMGA Ski Guide Course (100-Hours)

This is a ten-day course and the days are ten hours in length.

Vocational Course Descriptions, Prerequisites, and Employment Options

Following are course descriptions.

Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part I (120 Hours)

In this first 12-day program, we help you develop a complete set of alpine climbing skills for rock, snow, and ice, from the basics on up, and as we progress through each set of skills, we will provide you with a significant amount of practice climbing so you can master each technique. You will learn route finding and hazard assessment skills as well as self-rescue. Through the course you will make a series of

classic alpine ascents on rock routes and on major glaciers, and you and your fellow team members will lead the final climb as you apply all the climbing and leadership skills learned during the program.

We place as much emphasis on good mountain judgment as we do on the development of technical skills, and throughout this course we'll help you observe and analyze climbing routes, terrain features, and hazards so that by the end of the program you will have developed the ability to lead a small team safely through a rugged and complex environment and rope teams on basic and intermediate alpine routes. The climbs we make typically include four or five of the following: Mt. Baker, Mt. Shuksan, Glacier Peak, Cutthroat Peak, South Early Winter Spire, Liberty Bell, and Silver Star. Join this course for excellent skills development, diverse and beautiful alpine climbing experience, and preparation for leading your own alpine climbing teams.

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS:

Alpine Travel & Climbing Skills: (68 hours in total)

- selection & use of personal equipment as well as ropes, knots, & harnesses (2 hours)
- design concepts, selection, & use of technical equipment for rock, snow, & ice climbing (8 hours)
- the uses of map, compass, altimeter, and GPS (4 hours)
- principles of glacier travel & route finding (6 hours)
- belaying techniques on rock, snow, & ice (8 hours)
- the concept and application of the self-belay (5 hours)
- self-arrest from all positions (6 hours)
- free climbing technique on rock, snow, & ice (8 hours)
- French, German, and American cramponing techniques (8 hours)
- interrelationship, choice between, & application of all principal ice axe positions (2 hours)
- rappelling & prusiking (7 hours)
- glissading for speed & ease of descent (4 hours)

Objective Hazards Evaluation & Self-Rescue Skills: (19 hours in total)

- evaluation & prediction of mountain weather patterns (6 hours)
- introduction to the assessment of natural hazards (5 hours)
- individual & team crevasse rescue techniques (8 hours)

Leadership Skills: (22 hours in total)

- technical & personal functions of individuals in the rope team; role and responsibility (7 hours)
- problem solving: gathering appropriate data & assessment techniques (7 hours)
- evolving leadership roles: individual leadership vs. collective decision making (8 hours)

Environmental Protection Skills: (11 hours in total)

- an introduction to alpine ecology (6 hours)
- Leave No Trace travel, camping, & climbing skills (5 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Completed multiple day-long hikes in the mountains
- Camped overnight in the mountains
- Cooked on a backpacking stove
- Backpacked, having carried all of one's camping gear for at least two days and one night
- Packed sufficient food, water and gear for the terrain and weather for a backpacking trip

Employment options after successful completion of this program as well as sufficient personal practice include but are not limited to backpacking guide, field staff, camp instructor, and adventure guide or instructor. This program can be used as continuing education for current outdoor professionals. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options. This course also serves as a prerequisite for higher-level programs such as the AMTL II, Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive, AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course, AMGA Alpine Skills Course, AMGA Alpine Guide Course and AMGA Rock Guide Course.

Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part II (120 Hours)

This program is designed to establish sound judgment in the complex alpine environment as well as a high level of technical ability on rock, snow, and ice. The primary goal of this program is that upon completion, you will be able to function successfully as an alpine climbing leader at an intermediate or more advanced level.

In this second 12-day program you will develop more sophisticated technical skills on snow and ice while making ascents of the rugged glaciers and high peaks of North Cascades National Park and on rock while climbing spectacular granite routes. This is one of the rare courses in the world that specifically teaches techniques for leading on rock, snow, and ice. You will increase your proficiency in free climbing, and you will also become capable of setting up sophisticated and effective protective systems.

Your instructors will help you refine your skills of route selection, route finding, and natural hazards evaluation. Additionally, we emphasize the development of both the judgment and the specific climbing and protective systems skills required for leading more advanced climbs. It is our goal that you emerge from this program as a qualified rope team leader on both rock and glacier routes.

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

Alpine Travel & Climbing Skills: (57 hours in total)

- introduction to specialized equipment for intermediate and advanced climbing (4 hours)
- advanced problems in map, compass, altimeter, and GPS use (6 hours)
- introduction to the physics of glacier formation & movement for use in route finding and evaluation (4 hours)
- advanced protective systems and anchoring techniques (12 hours)
- intermediate and advanced free climbing techniques (9 hours)
- steep ice climbing technique (13 hours)
- nutrition & menu planning (1 hour)
- self-rescue skills in high angled terrain (8 hours)

Objective Hazards Evaluation & Self-Rescue Skills: (25 hours in total)

- advanced problems in objective hazard assessment (6 hours)
- introduction to avalanche hazard evaluation (2 hours)
- advanced problems in crevasse rescue (8 hours)
- intermediate and advanced climbing techniques (9 hours)

Leadership Skills: (22 hour in total)

- assessing team strength, security, and safety (7 hours)
- technical leadership on snow, ice, and rock (15 hours)

Environmental protection skills: (16 hours in total)

- assessment of the fragility and vitality of several ecosystems (8 hours)
- Leave No Trace travel, camping, & climbing skills (8 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Completion of AMTL I training or equivalent experience
- Mountaineering knots and hitches (figure-8 family, bowline family, clove hitch, Münter hitch, Prusik hitch)
- Basic top-rope and lead belay techniques
- Setting up anchors for a top-roped rock climb at a crag
- Basic rappelling techniques
- Use of crampons and ice axe
- Self-arrest maneuvers
- Crevasse rescue procedures (both how to get yourself out if you fall in a crevasse, and also how to set up a hauling system to rescue a fallen partner)
- Climbed a glaciated peak within the last two years
- Climbed a multipitch alpine rock route within the last two years
- Set up a crevasse rescue system in the last two years
- Successful completion of Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Alpinism 2: Intermediate Mountaineering or equivalent experience

Employment options after successful completion of this program as well as sufficient personal practice include but are not limited to backpacking guide, field staff, camp staff, and adventure guide or instructor. The program can be used as continuing education for current outdoor professionals. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options. This program also serves as a prerequisite for higher-level programs such as the AMTL III, Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive, Alpine Ice Introduction, AMGA Alpine Skills Course, AMGA Alpine Guide Course and AMGA Rock Guide Course.

Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part III (120 Hours)

The third portion of the Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Program provides the opportunity to practice and apply the skills that you learned in Parts I and II while engaging in a series of new advanced alpine techniques.

The earlier courses laid a solid foundation for your skills as a mountaineer, an ice climber, and a rock climber. This advanced level course provides an opportunity for you to apply those techniques and to expand on them while specializing in a specific type of alpine travel.

The Part III program offers two different specializations. The first is an aid climbing/big wall course, combined with a mountaineering expedition to a remote part of the North Cascades. The second option is an advanced alpine rock climbing trip that will combine a technical climbing seminar with an expedition to the remarkable granite rock spires that rise from the complex, heavily glaciated terrain of Bugaboo Provincial Park in British Columbia. (Please note that this second option is not approved to be funded by VA education benefits.)

In order to participate in this high-end training and expedition, you must first complete Parts I and II or have equivalent training. If you took Part II more than a year and a half prior, you will need to take a four-day refresher course. If you have engaged in a significant amount of climbing in the interim this may be waived.

Both options offer the unique opportunity for participants to co-lead a mini-expedition and to obtain further instruction.

The third part of our Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership series includes two options. Each of these options run on different dates. And though some may wish to participate in only one of these options, others will want to continue to expand their climbing and expeditionary skills by participating in both. Those who wish to use VA education benefits can choose to attend the option IIIa.

- Remote Cascades (IIIa) - Advanced Alpine Mountaineering and Rock Climbing, Aid Climbing, Big Wall Techniques & Remote Cascade Expedition
- Bugaboos (IIIb) - Advanced Alpine Rock Climbing, Squamish Multi-Pitch Rock Efficiency Clinic and Bugaboos Expedition

It is our primary goal that upon completion of this program you will be able to function successfully as an alpine climbing leader at an advanced level. Climbers who successfully complete all 4 parts of this program receive certification in Alpine Mountaineering Expedition Leadership. One does not need to complete Parts IIIa and IIIb to attain this certification. However, you will receive an endorsement based on the part that you choose to complete. Those who elect to complete more than one section will be awarded additional endorsements on their certification.

If you elect to take more than one version of the AMTL III, the second course at the AMTL III Level will be counted as an AMTL IV and you will be awarded your certificate of Alpine Mountaineering Expedition Leadership.

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

Advanced Aid and Free Climbing Skills: (46 hours in total)

- selection & use of personal equipment for an aid climb including specific ropes, harnesses, & equipment (2 hours)
- design concepts, selection & use of technical equipment for mixed aid & free climbing (2 hours)
- advanced rigging for multi-pitch climbing (6 hours)
- use of big wall gear & equipment including etriers, daisy chains, mechanical ascenders, haul bags, port-a-ledges, leeper cams, hooks & an assortment of other gear (8 hours)
- use of fixed lines (1 hour)
- strategy for multi-pitch aid or mixed climbs (5 hours)
- strategies for multi-pitch descents (4 hours)
- techniques for hauling, big wall bivies, & for pendulums (3 hours)
- clean aid climbing techniques (7 hours)
- complex hauling systems (3 hours)
- management of hanging belays (3 hours)
- strategies for multi-day routes (2 hours)

Expeditionary Skills: (17 hours in total)

- planning and preparing for a large scale backcountry expedition (6 hours)
- continued training on the use of maps, compasses, GPS, and guidebooks (4 hours)
- strategizing for multi-day “carry over” routes in a remote setting (7 hours)

Ice Climbing and Mountaineering Skills: (24 hours in total)

- study of ice climbing technique including all ice axe positions (9 hours)
- study of glacial structures and ice structures (2 hours)
- development of advanced technical protective systems in an alpine setting (6 hours)
- advanced study of movement over complex alpine terrain (7 hours)

Objective Hazards Evaluation & Self-Rescue Skills: (12 hours in total)

- evaluation & prediction of mountain weather patterns (2 hours)
- introduction to the assessment of natural hazards (2 hours)
- individual & team crevasse rescue techniques (8 hours)

Leadership Skills: (21 hours in total)

- study and practice of individual technical leadership skills (10 hours)
- technical & personal functions of individuals on an ascent: roles & responsibility (3 hours)
- problem solving: gathering appropriate data & assessment techniques (3 hours)
- evolving leadership roles: individual leadership vs. collective decision making (2 hours)
- large and small team expeditionary leadership strategy (3 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Successful completion of AMTL I and AMTL II or equivalent experience
- Ability to confidently and smoothly lead 5.6 traditional rock
- Ability to build a traditional rock anchor without direct supervision
- Ability to properly rig an autoblocking device in a multipitch environment
- Strong understanding of French Technique
- Ability to lead 45-degree ice
- Successful completion of Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Alpine Ice: Introduction or equivalent experience

This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors, or outdoor professionals. Employment options after successful completion of this program as well as sufficient personal practice include but are not limited to backpacking guide, field staff, adventure guide, rock gym instructor and rock or mountain guide apprentice. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options. This program also serves as a prerequisite for higher-level courses such as the AMTL IV, Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive, Alpine Ice Introduction, AMGA Alpine Skills Course, AMGA Alpine Guide Course and AMGA Rock Guide Course.

Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part IV (120 Hours)

The final portion of the AMTL program offers participants the opportunity to develop their skills in one of three technical environments. The first option is a Winter Ski Mountaineering Program in the North Cascades of Washington State, the second is a program to develop more sophisticated technical skills on rock, snow and ice on the Ptarmigan Traverse in the North Cascades and the third is to the Bravo Glacier on Canada's Mount Waddington. Those who wish to use VA education benefits are eligible can elect to use them for the ski program and the Ptarmigan Traverse in Washington State.

Students who complete all four parts of the AMTL series will receive a certificate of Alpine Mountaineering Expedition Leadership. Students may also elect to take a second version of Part III as a substitution for these Part IV options to receive this certificate.

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS FOR MT. WADDINTON OR PTARMIGAN TRAVERSE OPTION

Alpine Mountaineering Skills: (49 hours in total)

- Development of mixed climbing skills - participants will transition from snow climbing to rock climbing on most routes. (7 hours)
- continued development of movement skills on moderate ice and technical rock (6 hours)
- development of simul-climbing skills on lower angled ice with running belays (4 hours)

- study and practice of transitions between glacier travel mode and technical climbing mode (5 hours)
- continued study of the proper choice between and application of the primary ice axe positions: piolet canne, panne, manche, poignard, ramasse, rampe, ancre, and traction (3 hours)
- specialized designs and uses of alpine and technical tools in high angle climbing (2 hours)
- free climbing technique on alpine rock (10 hours)
- advanced concepts in the proper selection and placement of snow, ice and rock gear for belays and intermediate protection (8 hours)
- integration of specific skills with the general goals of efficient, safe, and self-dependent climbing (4 hours)

Expeditionary Skills: (10 hours in total)

- continued training on the use of maps, compasses, GPS, and guidebooks (2 hours)
- strategizing for multi-day backcountry tours in a remote setting (2 hours)
- practical application of expeditionary staged camp techniques (6 hours)

Mountaineering Skills: (25 hours in total)

- review of glacial and ice structures (2 hours)
- continued development of mountain sense and the ability to follow a "line of weakness" (5 hours)
- development of advanced technical protective systems in an alpine setting (9 hours)
- advanced study of movement over complex alpine terrain (9 hours)

Objective Hazards Evaluation & Self-Rescue Skills: (12 hours in total)

- evaluation & prediction of mountain weather patterns (2 hours)
- introduction to the assessment of natural hazards (2 hours)
- individual & team crevasse rescue techniques (8 hours)

Leadership Skills: (24 hours in total)

- continued study and practice of individual technical leadership skills (10 hours)
- development of technical leadership strategies on complex terrain (4 hours)
- technical & personal functions of individuals on an ascent: roles & responsibility (3 hours)
- problem solving: gathering appropriate data & assessment techniques (2 hours)
- evolving leadership roles: individual leadership vs. collective decision making (3 hours)
- large and small team expeditionary leadership strategy (2 hours)

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS FOR SKI MOUNTAINEERING OPTION

Ski Mountaineering Skills: (49 hours in total)

- selection and understanding of ski touring gear (2 hours)
- selection and understanding of transceivers and avalanche equipment (2 hours)
- development of backcountry ski technique (12 hours)
- terrain analysis for uphill and downhill track setting (2 hours)
- development of tour planning strategies (2 hours)
- development of evaluative skills for avalanche terrain (2 hours)
- practical application of snow analysis and record keeping (2 hours)
- construction of snow caves, igloos and emergency shelters (6 hours)
- packing and pulling an expedition sled (6 hours)
- crevasse rescue techniques involving ski equipment (6 hours)
- practical application of self-belay and self-arrest while ski touring (3 hours)
- practical application of rappel techniques while wearing skis (4 hours)

Expeditionary Skills: (10 hours in total)

- continued training on the use of maps, compasses, GPS, and guidebooks (2 hours)
- strategizing for multi-day backcountry tours in a remote setting (2 hours)
- practical application of expeditionary staged camp techniques (6 hours)

Mountaineering Skills: (25 hours in total)

- review of glacial and ice structures (2 hours)
- continued development of mountain sense and the ability to follow a "line of weakness" (5 hours)
- development of advanced technical protective systems in an alpine setting (9 hours)
- advanced study of movement over complex alpine terrain (9 hours)

Objective Hazards Evaluation & Self-Rescue Skills: (12 hours in total)

- evaluation & prediction of mountain weather patterns (2 hours)
- introduction to the assessment of natural hazards (2 hours)
- individual & team crevasse rescue techniques (8 hours)

Leadership Skills: (24 hours in total)

- continued study and practice of individual technical leadership skills (10 hours)
- development of technical leadership strategies on complex terrain (4 hours)
- technical & personal functions of individuals on an ascent: roles & responsibility (3 hours)
- problem solving: gathering appropriate data & assessment techniques (2 hours)
- evolving leadership roles: individual leadership vs. collective decision making (3 hours)
- large and small team expeditionary leadership strategy (2 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Successful completion of AMTL I, AMTL II and AMTL III or equivalent experience.
- Successful completion of Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue or equivalent experience
- If one elects to participate in the ski mountaineering option, skiers must have successfully completed an Avalanche Level I Course and Rescue Day course or the equivalent.

This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors and outdoor professionals. Employment options after successful completion of this program as well as sufficient personal practice include but are not limited to rock or mountain guide apprentice, work in the National Park system as a backcountry ranger, or University Outdoor Program coordinator. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options. This program also serves as a prerequisite for higher-level programs such as the Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive, AMGA Alpine Skills Course, AMGA Alpine Guide Course, AMGA Rock Guide Course, and AMGA Ski Guide Course, depending on which option you take.

Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue (30 Hours)

The Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue course is a three-day hands-on class that fully takes place on the massive glaciers of Washington's Mt. Baker, considered the best glacier training ground in the U.S. The intent is to give students the fundamental skills to be a contributing member of a rope team. This is an introductory level course and is essential to build your tool kit in order to kick off your mountaineering career. Continual improvement of our curriculum ensures that this course is a good way to keep up with the state of the art for continuing education as well.

In this course, you will learn front pointing and French cramponing techniques, the eight principal ice axe positions, self-arrest, anchor placement, procedures for glacier travel, crevasse rescue technique, and route finding.

We recommend this program for climbers who would like to brush up on glacier travel skills in preparation for other programs, as these skills are prerequisites for intermediate courses and some students might have all the other required skills except for glacier travel and crevasse rescue.

Though this program takes place on the upper flanks of Mt. Baker, we do not make a summit attempt. Instead, we maximize our instructional time and dedicate our three days to learning and practicing essential glacier travel skills.

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS:

- selection & use of personal equipment as well as ropes, knots, & harnesses (2 hours)
- the uses of map, compass, altimeter, and GPS (2 hours)
- principles of glacier travel, route finding, glaciation, mountain weather, & geology (4 hours)
- self-arrest from all positions (4 hours)
- French, German, and American cramponing techniques (3 hours)
- interrelationship, choice between, & application of all principal ice axe positions (2 hours)
- rope work (5 hours)
- snow anchors (4 hours)
- rappelling & prusiking (4 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Completed multiple day-long hikes in the mountains
- Camped overnight in the mountains
- Cooked on a backpacking stove
- Backpacked, having carried all of one's camping gear for at least two days and one night
- Packed sufficient food, water and gear for the terrain and weather for a backpacking trip

This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors, or other outdoor professionals. Employment options after successful completion of this program as well as sufficient personal practice include, but are not limited to backpacking guides, field staff, adventure guides and co-leaders or apprentices. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options. This course also serves as a prerequisite for higher-level programs such as the AMTL II, III, & IV, Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive, Alpine Ice Introduction, AMGA Alpine Skills Course, AMGA Alpine Guide Course and AMGA Rock Guide Course.

Alpine Ice Climbing: Introduction (60 Hours)

The first course offered by AAI in 1975, this intensive program provides thorough instruction in all the skills required on difficult alpine ice climbs. Through this curriculum, you will develop a complete repertoire of state-of-the-art high-angle snow and ice climbing skills and learn to apply them efficiently in all conditions. All of this instruction is located in America's top glacier training area, the Coleman Glacier of Mt. Baker.

Participants are instructed in a highly refined, hybrid ice climbing technique that combines the most effective aspects of American, German, and French approaches to snow and ice. Groups are very small and there is flexibility in emphasis according to individual need.

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS:

- Design concepts, performance, and selection of ice axes & technical tools (2 hours)
- Proper choice between and application of the primary ice axe positions: piolet canne, panne, manche, poignard, ramasse, rampe, ancre, and traction (5 hours)
- Choice between and application of American, French, and German cramponing techniques (4 hours)
- Proper selection and placement of ice screws, snow flukes & pickets for belays and intermediate protection (6 hours)
- The uses of mechanical belay devices in alpine climbing (4 hours)
- Specialized designs and uses of alpine and technical tools in high angle climbing (4 hours)
- Free climbing technique on overhanging ice (8 hours)
- Setting up and operating hanging belays (4 hours)
- The uses of prusiks (3 hours)
- Crevasse rescue techniques: self-rescue, pulley systems, and pulley system combinations (8 hours)
- The use of skiing glissades for ease and speed of descent (2 hours)
- Glacial structure and movement: using large external landforms to predict inner glacial structures and hence the difficulties and hazards of a potential route (2 hours)
- Evaluation of the objective hazards of avalanche, rock fall, and ice fall (2 hours)
- Integration of specific skills with the general goals of efficient, safe, and self-dependent climbing (4 hours)
- Leave No Trace travel, camping, & climbing (2 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Completed multiple day-long hikes in the mountains
- Camped overnight in the mountains
- Cooked on a backpacking stove
- Backpacked, having carried all of one's camping gear for at least two days and one night
- Packed sufficient food, water and gear for the terrain and weather for a backpacking trip
- Basic alpine mountaineering experience
- Basic snow climbing skills
- Basic glacier travel skills
- Successful completion of AMTL II, AMTL III, or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue or equivalent experience

This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors, or other outdoor professionals. Employment options after successful completion of this program as well as sufficient personal practice include but are not limited to field staff, adventure guide, or ice climbing co-instructor or apprentice. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options. This program also serves as a prerequisite for higher-level programs such as the AMTL III, AMGA Alpine Skills Course, and AMGA Alpine Guide Course.

Alpinism 1: Introduction to Mountaineering (60 Hours)

This course is intended to serve as an intensive and complete introduction to off-trail alpine travel, and to all the fundamental alpine mountaineering skills of rock, snow, and ice climbing. The course is presented in the most highly glaciated area in the conterminous forty-eight states and offers exposure to an unusually large variety of landforms and climbing surfaces. Groups are small and individual attention is very great, allowing instructors to respond to participants who are progressing at different rates or who want emphasis on different parts of the curriculum.

Upon completion of the program, each participant should be qualified as a technically competent rope team member capable of making alpine mountaineering ascents on routes of intermediate difficulty.

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS:

Climbing Skills: (43 hours in total)

- Selection and use of personal equipment (1 hour)
- Selection and use of ropes, knots, and harnesses (1 hour)
- Selection and use of rock, snow, & ice anchors for belays & intermediate protection (4 hours)
- Belaying techniques on rock, snow, and ice (5 hours)
- Free climbing techniques on low and high angle rock, snow, and ice (9 hours)
- Principles of glacier travel & route finding (5 hours)
- Self-arrest; rappelling, & prusiking (5 hours)
- The concept and application of the self-belay (5 hours)
- Individual & team crevasse rescue techniques (8 hours)

General Mountain Skills: (17 hours in total)

- Leave No Trace travel, camping, and climbing (5 hours)
- An introduction to alpine ecology (2 hours)
- Map, compass, altimeter and GPS use: reading, intersection, and triangulation (3 hours)
- Evaluation and prediction of mountain weather patterns (2 hours)
- Introduction to avalanche hazard evaluation (2 hours)
- Introduction to first aid and the evacuation of injured climbers (3 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Completed multiple day-long hikes in the mountains
- Camped overnight in the mountains
- Cooked on a backpacking stove
- Backpacked, having carried all of one's camping gear for at least two days and one night
- Packed sufficient food, water and gear for the terrain and weather for a backpacking trip
- Good physical condition
- Ability to carry 45-55-pound backpack for multiple hours
- Stamina to hike for over 8 hours (including breaks and with lesser pack weight)

Employment options after successful completion of this program as well as sufficient personal practice include but are not limited to backpacking guide, field staff, and adventure guide or instructor. This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors, or other outdoor professionals. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options. The Alpinism 1 also serves as a prerequisite for other programs such as the Alpinism 2, AMTL II, and AMGA Alpine Skills Course.

Alpinism 2: Intermediate Mountaineering (60 Hours)

This program is designed for climbers who have participated in introductory level mountaineering training or who have a similar level of skill and climbing experience. In this program you will review and refresh those glacier and alpine rock skills and advance your climbing to the next level. It includes three days on alpine rock and three on glacier routes.

To qualify for the course, you need to have a few days of rock climbing under your belt plus previous experience with the basics of self-arrest, cramponing, crevasse rescue, and glacier travel. We review

those skills briefly and then build on them in order to help you move confidently to the intermediate level of alpine climbing.

For the first day of the alpine rock section of this program, we use an easily accessible cragging area just east of the Cascade crest. We work on anchors, belaying, and free climbing technique, and during this day you will also refresh your knowledge and develop more advanced skills with knots, building and equalizing anchors, and managing the rope.

On our second and third days, we apply those skills to multi-pitch routes on Liberty Bell and South Early Winter Spire, both above Washington Pass, the Cascade's premier alpine rock climbing area. During these multi-pitch climbs, your guide will continue to evaluate your climbing technique and help you refine it as you become steadily more comfortable with challenging ground and exposure.

We then shift to a different part of the North Cascades for an ascent of a major glaciated peak, most commonly Mt. Shuksan, Sahale Peak, or Eldorado Peak. The routes we climb offer excellent snow and ice climbing, and these peaks are among the most beautiful glaciated mountains in North America. In addition to reviewing skills, throughout this program your guide will help you advance your technique and complete your repertoire of skills for intermediate level mountaineering and ascents. Additionally, we will involve you with route finding and terrain assessment with the goal of helping you further develop good mountaineering judgment. As in all AAI programs, we will also thoroughly cover Leave No Trace skills so that you can minimize or eliminate impacts on the environment whenever you camp and climb.

By the time you have completed the classic ascents in this program, you will have become a climber who is more highly skilled, a better judge of hazards, and adept at applying LNT techniques in a variety of mountain environments.

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS:

Alpine Travel & Climbing Skills: (51 hours in total)

- Selection of specialized equipment for intermediate climbing (3 hours)
- Intermediate problems in maps, compass, altimeter, and GPS use (4 hours)
- Introduction to the physics of glacier formation & movement for use in route finding and evaluation (8 hours)
- Intermediate free climbing techniques (10 hours)
- Toprope systems (4 hours)
- Traditional climbing gear removal (3 hours)
- Knot passing (2 hours)
- Multi-pitch climbing systems and anchoring techniques (10 hours)
- Intermediate problems in crevasse rescue (5 hours)
- Intermediate problems in objective hazard assessment (2 hours)

General Mountain Skills: (9 hours in total)

- Leave No Trace travel, camping, and climbing (5 hours)
- Alpine ecology: the fragility and vitality of several ecosystems (2 hours)
- Evaluation and prediction of mountain weather patterns (2 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Successful completion of Alpinism 1 or equivalent experience
- Completed multiple day-long hikes in the mountains
- Camped overnight in the mountains
- Cooked on a backpacking stove
- Familiarity with the basics of rock climbing

- Previous experience with self-arresting, cramponing, crevasse rescue, and glacier travel
- Backpacked, having carried all of one's camping gear for a least two days and one night
- Packed sufficient food, water and gear for the terrain and weather for a backpacking trip

This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors, or other outdoor professionals. Employment options after successful completion of this program as well as sufficient personal practice include but are not limited to backpacking guide, field staff, and adventure guide or instructor. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options. The Alpinism 2 also serves as a prerequisite for other programs such as the AMTL II, AMGA Alpine Skills Course, and AMGA Alpine Guide Course.

Wilderness First Responder Certification Course (80 Hours)

The Wilderness First Responder course is an 80-hour program that was designed to provide outdoor educators and active outdoor practitioners with the skills they need to deal with a wide array of medical issues and traumatic injuries in the backcountry. It is the outdoor education and recreation industry's standard for wilderness medical training. It is the wilderness medicine training course for outdoor professionals

CURRICULUM AND ITINERARY:

Day 1: 8 am-5:30/6 pm (8-9 hours in total)

- Opening & Course Paperwork (.5 hour)
- Course Introduction & Medical/Legal Considerations (.5 hour)
- General Concepts in Patient Care (1 hour)
- Body Defenses (1 hour)
- Basic Pharmacology (1 hour)
- Introduction to the Patient Assessment System (1 hour)
- Basic Life Support Lab & Simulations (1 hour)
- Wilderness Adult & Child CPR/AED Skills Lab (1 hour)
- Case Study Homework (1-2 hours)

Day 2: 8 am-5:30/6 pm (8-9 hours in total)

- Introduction to Trauma (1 hour)
- Critical System Problems (1-2 hours)
- Stable & Unstable Extremity Injuries (1.5 hours)
- 3rd Triangle Skills Lab & SOAP Evaluation Process (2 hours)
- Traumatic Video Simulations (1 hour)
- Case Study Homework (1 hour)
- Demo & assign cut T-shirt rolls (.5 hour)

Day 3: 8 am-5:30/6 pm (8-9 hours in total)

- Case Study Homework Review (5. Hour)
- Quiz (.5 hour)
- Basic Extremities Splinting Lab (1 hour)
- Wounds Lecture (1-2 hours)
- Wounds Lab (1 hour)
- Focused Spine Assessment (2 hours)
- Traumatic Video Simulations (1 hour)
- Case Study Homework (1 hour)

Day 4: 8 am-5:30/6 pm (8-9 hours in total)

- Spine Assessment Quiz (.5 hour)
- Case Study Homework Review (.5 hour)

- Dehydration (.5 hour)
- Sunburn Exposure (.5 hour)
- Heat Exhaustion, Heat Stroke, & Hyponatremia (1 hour)
- Minor Heat Injuries (.5 hour)
- Hypothermia (1 hour)
- Drowning (.5 hour)
- Cold Injuries (1 hour)
- Spine Management Lab (1 hour)
- Case Study Homework (1 hour)

Day 5: 8 am-5:30/6 pm (8-9 hours in total)

- Case Study Homework Review (.5 hour)
- Quiz (.5 hour)
- Wilderness Bites & Stings (1 hour)
- Allergies (1.5 hour)
- Anaphylaxis (1.5 hour)
- Injection Lab & Allergies & Toxins Worksheet (1 hour)
- Traumatic Video Simulations (1 hour)
- Case Study Homework (1 hour)

Day 6: 8 am-5:30/6 pm (8-9 hours in total)

- Case Study Homework Review (.5 hour)
- Quiz (.5 hour)
- Lightning Injuries (1 hour)
- Altitude (2 hours)
- Dislocations Lab (2 hours)
- Traumatic Video Simulations (1 hour)
- Case Study Homework (1 hour)

Day 7: 8 am-5:30/6 pm (8-9 hours in total)

- Case Study Homework Review (.5 hour)
- Asthma (.5 hour)
- Diabetes: Hypoglycemia & Hyperglycemia (1 hour)
- Heart Attack, Angina, & Stroke (1 hour)
- Ears, Eyes, Nose, Throat, & Teeth Interactive Case Studies (1 hour)
- Advanced Extremities Splinting Lab (2 hour)
- Improvised Litters and Carries (1 hour)
- Case Study Homework (1 hour)

Day 8: 8 am-5:30/6 pm (8-9 hours in total)

- Case Study Homework Review (.5 hour)
- Traumatic Video Simulations (1 hour)
- Assessing Medical Problems (1.5 hour)
- Medical Simulations (5-6 hours)

Day 9: 8 am-5 pm (8 hours in total)

- Mass Casualty Video Simulation (1 hour)
- Litter Carries & Passes (1 hour)
- Written WFR & WCPER Exams & Review (5 hours)
- Medical Equipment & First Aid Kits (1 hour)

While the focus remains on expedition medicine, the information and skills learned during our Wilderness First Responder course may be directly applied to other emergency medical situations where

rapid EMS and advanced medical care is not available e.g.: disaster relief, remote health care in third world countries, etc. The course includes certification in adult & child CPR and AED.

There are no prerequisites for this course, simply a desire to be a Wilderness First Responder.

Mountain climbing guides, river guides, hiking guides, and backcountry rangers are required to have a WFR certification in order to obtain employment. Most land managers in the United States require commercial guides to hold WFR certifications. And every individual that one might be responsible for in these professions expect their guides and rangers to have a Wilderness First Responder certification.

All outdoor professionals should keep this certification current. Please see Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator (40 Hours)

This program was designed to provide baseline information for new guides and instructors on how to get and hold a job, to understand industry standards, and to develop a plan of action for a commercial trip to a new location.

CURRICULUM AND ITINERARY

Day 1: 8am-5pm (8 hours in total)

- Introduction to professionalism (1 hour)
- How to obtain and keep employment (1 hour)
- Common reasons for termination (1 hour)
- Introduction to mountain electronics (2 hour)
- Leave No Trace - Plan Ahead and Prepare (1 hour)
- Map and compass for professionals (1 hour)
- Tour planning (1 hour)

Day 2: 8am-5pm (8 hours in total)

- Diversity and gender issues in the outdoors (1 hour)
- Leave No Trace - Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces (1 hour)
- Commercial permitting and land management issues (2 hours)
- Liability and accident insurance (2 hours)
- Resume development (2 hours)

Day 3: 8am-5pm (8 hours in total)

- Personal marketing (1 hour)
- Ancillary income (sponsorship, writing, photography, etc.) (1 hour)
- Leave No Trace - Dispose of Waste Properly, Leave What You Find (1 hour)
- Type of jobs available and employment requirements (2 hours)
- Ancillary industry organizations (1 hour)
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) inspections (2 hours)

Day 4: 8am-5pm (8 hours in total)

- Development of a risk management plan (4 hours)
- Morning and evening guide meetings (2 hour)
- Leave No Trace - Minimize Campfire Impacts, Respect Wildlife (1 hour)
- Preparation for final assessment (1 hour)

Day 5: 8am-5pm (8 hours in total)

- Leave No Trace - Be Considerate of Other Visitors (2 hours)

- Final Assessment (6 hours)

Final Assessment: Students will work in teams of two to develop a comprehensive expedition plan. This plan will include marketing materials, meeting place, itinerary, permit rules, equipment lists and a tour plan. They will present their final plan to the group at the end of the day.

This five-day program provides four days of instruction and one day of assessment. Participants should expect homework, study and reading assignments each night.

This is an introductory level course and the main prerequisite is time as an outdoor enthusiast and recreator.

Employment options after completion of the course abound as this is a training to attain and keep employment as an outdoor professional. For example, current mountain guides and instructors can take this program as continuing education and receive their Leave No Trace Trainer certificate. New mountain guides, instructors, or other outdoor professionals can learn more about what to include in their professional resume for future employment. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course (27 Hours)

The American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) Single Pitch Instructor Course is the first in the AMGA sequence of climbing instructor and guide training programs.

The SPI course was designed to help capable recreational climbers transition into capable and effective climbing instructors. The course focuses on the technical skills required by an instructor as they are applied in all forms of single pitch climbing instruction. In addition to this, the course addresses the essential educational and environmental tenets required to teach climbing. Those seeking certification may go on to take a two-day field examination following the course or at any time within three years after successfully completing the course.

Certified Single Pitch Instructors are expected to demonstrate the technical and educational proficiencies necessary to instruct a variety of single pitch rock climbing skills in a safe and effective manner to both groups and individuals. While not all students are fully prepared for the certification exam by the end of the course, every participant will have the training to practice and prepare for an exam in the future and will leave the course with many new ideas and skills.

The SPI course is intended for recreational climbers who are already proficient in both top-rope and lead climbing. It was designed to benefit those who wish to facilitate outdoor climbing programs for groups such as those offered by guide services, camps, schools, universities, therapeutic groups, churches and climbing gyms. Those who wish to teach climbing in the outdoors tend to have a much higher success rate in obtaining employment as climbing instructors with this training and certification. The AMGA strongly suggests this course as a precursor to those interested in pursuing Rock Instructor or Rock Guide training and certification.

CURRICULUM

Day 1: (9 hours in total)

- SPI and AMGA Program Overview (1 hour)
- Professionalism (1 hour)
- Equipment (1 hour)
- Knots and Hitches (1 hour)
- Protection and Anchoring (1 hour)
- Instructor Lead Demonstration Climb (.5 hour)

- Belaying (1 hour)
- Base Managed Sites (1 hour)
- Base Managed Assistance Skills (1 hour)
- Daily Debrief (.5)

Day 2: (9 hours in total)

- The Climbing Site (1 hour)
- Site Organization and Group Management (1 hour)
- Top Managed Sites (2 hours)
- Lowering (1 hour)
- Top Managed Assistance Skills (1 hour)
- Rappelling (2 hours)
- Daily Debrief (1 hour)

Day 3: (9 hours in total)

- Programing and Risk Management (2 hours)
- Instructional Technique (2 hours)
- Teaching Climbing Movement (2 hours)
- Review Sessions (2 hours)
- Final Group and Individual Debriefs (1 hour)

PREREQUISITES:

- You are at least 18 years old.
- You are a member of the American Mountain Guides Association at the time of the course. (If you're not a member already, you can sign up at amga.com.)
- You have a genuine interest in rock climbing and instructing novices on single pitch crags.
- You have at least 12 months of prior climbing experience.
- You are an active climber with traditional climbing experience, and you have lead a minimum of 15 traditional pitches.
- You are able to comfortably set-up climbs, to belay, to rappel without guidance and can demonstrate familiarity with anchoring principals, natural anchors and artificial anchors (wires, hexes, passive and active cams). These skills may be assessed at the start of your course.
- You are capable of comfortably climbing 5.8 while on top-rope.
- Successful completion of AMTL I or equivalent experience

This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors, or other outdoor professionals. Employment options after completion of this course and once you have passed the AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Exam include being an instructor of outdoor climbing programs for groups such as those offered by guide services, camps, schools, universities, therapeutic groups, churches and climbing gyms. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options. This course is also a prerequisite for higher-level programs such as the AMGA Rock Guide Course and Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive.

Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive (140 Hours)

The technical rope rescue comprehensive takes the skills and techniques learned in the climbing courses and applies them specifically to rescue scenarios in mountain environments. The TRRC will take rescue skills learned in multi-pitch rock rescue seminars and then expand on them. The course will also delve into the specific and different techniques used in both mountain rescue and fire rescue.

Students will practice rescue techniques in both low and high angle environments. Students will be instructed in rescue operations, incident management, safety factors and forces, the grammar of rescue, and the use of rescue equipment.

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

- Team Rescue Hauling Systems - 3:1, 6:1 and 9:1 (6 hours)
- Self-Rescue Hauling Systems on Rock and on Snow and Ice - 3:1, 5:1, 6:1 (10 hours)
- Pulley Systems - simple, compound and complex (2 hours)
- Lowering Systems - with a break rack, scarab, munter-hitch, super-munter, tube-style device, and autoblocking device (10 hours)
- Anchor Systems - for team rescue and self-rescue on high-angle terrain, steep-angle terrain and on snow and ice. (12 hours)
- Lowering Systems with a Litter (9 hours)
- Use of a Guiding Line (9 hours)
- Use of High Lines and Reeving Systems (9 hours)
- Patent Packaging - with and without a harness (4 hours)
- Specialized Rescue Equipment - including discussions of Class I-III harnesses, chest harnesses, rigging plates, pulleys, swivels, edge protection, and tripods (9 hours)
- Improvised Rescue Equipment - waist and chest harnesses, improvised tri-pods and bipods, high points, and improvised anchors (6 hours)
- Rope Climbing Techniques - with a friction-hitch system, with an autoblocking device, with an assisted breaking device (4 hours)
- Belay Escapes - off an autoblocking device and off the body (4 hours)
- Belays - tandem prusik belays, body belays, belay plates, mechanical belays (6 hours)
- Passing Knots - in both a multi-pitch self-rescue setting as well as in a team rescue setting with a litter (5 hours)
- Scene Management - command structure (2 hours)
- Special Considerations for Mountain Rescue (2 hours)
- Crevasse Rescue - critical procedures for team and self-rescue (5 hours)
- Multi-Pitch Descents with a Patient in a Self-Rescue Setting (5 hours)
- Helicopter Operations (1 hour)
- Pick-Offs - patient pickoffs for rope rescue teams and self-rescue (4 hours)
- Physics of Rescue Systems on Anchors and on Equipment (8 hours)
- Rappelling - classic rappel, extended rappel, tandem rappel, and counterbalance rappel techniques (4 hours)
- Knots - figure-eight family, overhand, double-overhand-on-a-bite, bowline, double bowline, long-tail bowline, butterfly, high tension tie-off, wrap-three-pull-two, and wrap-two-pull-one (2 hours)
- Bends - double-fisherman's, overhand flat bend, water bend, double sheet bend, frost bend (2 hours)
- Hitches - prusik, kliemheist, autoblock, clove, munter, and garda (2 hours)
- Load Releasable Hitches - munter-mule and radium-release (2 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Experience traditional climbing
- Experience building anchors on snow and rock
- Experience mountaineering and crevasse rescue systems
- Successful completion of AMTL I, AMTL II, AMTL III, AMTL IV, or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of the AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course or equivalent experience

Employment options after completion of this program includes being a part of a search and rescue team and any job that it is required to have National Fire Protection Association Technician Level training, such as fire service and other emergency response personnel who perform technical rescue operations.

This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors, SAR team members, or other outdoor professionals. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

Leave No Trace Trainer (20 Hours)

Trainer courses are designed for educators, guides, agency employees, and other outdoor professionals. Successful graduates of the Trainer Course gain the skills to teach Leave No Trace techniques and ethics to their clients, friends and family.

Participants learn the concepts of Leave No Trace and prepare to teach Leave No Trace curriculum in a variety of settings. Workshop topics include the underlying ethics and seven principles of Leave No Trace:

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS:

- Plan Ahead and Prepare (3 hours)
- Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces (3 hours)
- Dispose of Waste Properly (3 hours)
- Leave What You Find (3 hours)
- Minimize Campfire Impacts (3 hours)
- Respect Wildlife (3 hours)
- Be Considerate of Other Visitors (2 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Experience backpacking

Employment options after completion of this program as well as meeting other job requirements includes outdoor education, guiding, agency employee, among other outdoor professional roles. This is the minimum requirement for outdoor professionals and can be used as continuing education for current outdoor professionals. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

Leave No Trace Master Educator (50 Hours)

The Leave No Trace Master Educator program is a longer version of the Trainer program. Those who complete the five-day program will be able to provide Trainer programs to students or co-workers after completing the certification.

CURRICULUM & ITINERARY

Day 1: 8am-5pm (8 hours in total)

- Introduction to Leave No Trace (1 hour)
- Introduction to teaching topics (1 hour)
- Introduction to outdoor pedagogy (1 hour)
- Lesson planning (1 hour)
- Equipment and food check (1 hour)
- Gear rentals (1 hour)
- Tent and food partner planning (1 hour)
- Development of the week's plan, and principal one - plan ahead and prepare (1 hour)

Day 2: 7am-5pm (10 hours in total)

- Locate and set up camp (2 hours)
- Principal two – travel and camp on durable surfaces (4 hours)
- Principal three – dispose of waste properly (4 hours)

Day 3: 7am-6pm (11 hours in total)

- Break down camp and move to second backcountry camp (2 hours)
- Principal four – leave what you find (4 hours)
- Principal five – minimize campfire impact (4 hours)
- If conditions are acceptable, the team will build a mound fire (1 hour)

Day 4: 7am-6pm (11 hours in total)

- Break down camp and move to a third backcountry camp (2 hours)
- Principal six – respect wildlife (4 hours)
- Principal seven – be considerate of other visitors (4 hours)
- In addition to these topics, the instructors will demonstrate how to complete several different types of bear hangs. Obviously, if the trip is in bear country, this will be done earlier in the program. (1 hour)

Day 5: 7am-5pm (10 hours in total)

- Break down camp and pack up (2 hours)
- Outdoor ethics (3 hours)
- Authority of the resource (2 hours)
- How to run a Leave No Trace Trainer course (3 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Previous backpacking experience

Employment after completion of this program as well as other job requirements includes working with land management agencies and LNT Master Educator for a guide service to complete internal Trainer trainings for their staff. This program can be used as continuing education for current outdoor professionals. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

Avalanche Level I and Rescue Skills (32 Hours)

On average 37 people are killed each year by avalanches in the United States alone. The people caught in them start almost all of these avalanches. Some basic level or training and knowledge can dramatically increase your margin of safety while traveling in the backcountry.

In this four-day course, we will teach students what to look for in the snowpack, how to test stability, how to read terrain and avoid danger zones, and how to rescue themselves and partners if caught in an avalanche.

The goals of this course are to:

- Provide a basic understanding of avalanches.
- Describe a framework for decision-making and risk management in avalanche terrain.
- Focus less on providing "answers" and more on identifying the right questions.
- Provide lessons and exercises that are practically oriented, useful, and applicable in the field

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS:

- Types of avalanches (3 hours)
- Characteristics of avalanches (2 hours)
- An introduction to how avalanches form and release (3 hours)
- Avalanche terrain (4 hours)
- Trip planning and preparation (4 hours)
- Travel techniques (4 hours)

- Decision making (4 hours)
- Avalanche rescue (8 hours)

This course does not cover snow science or avalanche technology in any detail. While it touches on and introduces advanced subjects such as snowpack development and metamorphism, these are discussed at a basic, non-technical level.

PREREQUISITES:

- Previous experience on snowshoes, skis or a splitboard

This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors, or other outdoor professionals. Employment after completion of this program as well as being a proficient skier or snowboarder includes but is not limited to ski or snowboard instructors at a ski resort, ski area or snow park, hiking or snowshoe guide, ski patroller, or backcountry ranger. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

Avalanche Pro Level I (40 Hours)

The Avalanche Pro Level I Course develops an understanding of snowpack formation and metamorphism. Observation guidelines and recording standards for factors that influence and indicate snowpack stability are presented. Avalanche formation and release are discussed. A stability analysis and forecasting process is introduced. This course is designed for those who have an interest in expanding their knowledge and understanding of snow stability and snow stability factors. It is ideal for snow safety and guiding professionals and people interested in these and related careers. The Pro Level I serves as a pre-requisite for Avalanche Pro Level II courses.

This course will be held over five full, consecutive days, including both classroom and field instruction. Participants on a Pro Level I course can expect a mix of classroom and field hours in the following subjects:

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

- Avalanche formation and release (6 hours)
- Snow stability factors (5 hours)
- Observing and recording weather (7 hours)
- Observing and recording the snowpack (7 hours)
- Observing and recording avalanche activity (8 hours)
- Stability analysis and forecasting (7 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Completion of an AAA recognized Level 1 course for student pursuing the Professional track.
- Completion of an AAA recognized Avalanche Rescue course (available starting in late 2017)
- One winter season (20 days or more) of relevant experience, demonstrated through one of the following:
 - Prior avalanche work experience or
 - A supervised unpaid work internship in the guiding/avalanche industry, supported by a letter of reference or
 - Winter backcountry travel experience supported by documented trip planning and recorded field observations that contributed to avalanche hazard assessment and personal avalanche risk management or
 - Letter of Recommendation from professional member or
 - AAA Membership, Affiliate or Professional

This program can be used as continuing education for current mountain guides, instructors or other outdoor professionals. Employment after successful completion of this program along with being a proficient skier or snowboarder includes, but is not limited to ski patrol for a ski resort, ski area or snow park, backcountry ranger, or avalanche forecaster/observer for a ski resort, a railroad, a mining operation or a department of transportation. This level of certification is required for those who wish to seek employment as avalanche instructors. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

AMGA Alpine Skills Course (50 Hours)

The Alpine Skills Course (ASC) can be the first step in the AMGA's Alpine Guide training and certification process. It is a 5-day course, designed for aspiring guides and instructors who have an alpine climbing background and interest in developing their guiding skills in this setting. The ASC places strong emphasis on maximizing client rewards while effectively managing risks.

The ASC addresses guiding techniques commonly used on simple glacier routes that may include rock scrambles up to Class 4 with short steps of easy 5th class. The terrain might also require technical descents, management and movement of multiple clients, small team rescue and other related skills and knowledge.

There will be considerable structured practice in the ASC. Techniques will be presented and/or demonstrated, you will practice on the ground, and then practice in venues that are representative of the terrain.

CURRICULUM & ITINERARY

Day 1 (10 hours in total)

1. Introductions and Course Overview (.5 hour)
2. AMGA / IFMGA Overview (.5 hour)
3. Risk Management Discussion and Safety Briefing for Course (.5 hour)
4. Professionalism (.5 hour)
5. Client Care Discussion (.5 hour)
6. Guides Notebook (.5 hour)
7. Guides Meeting Process (.5 hour)
8. Navigation and Time Management (.5 hour)
9. Guides Pack (day and overnight) (.5 hour)
10. Knots and Hitches (1 hour)
11. Technical Equipment Selection (.5 hour)
12. Belay Anchors (1 hour)
13. Belay Techniques (1 hour)
14. Lowering Techniques (1 hour)
15. Rappelling Techniques (1 hour)

Day 2 (10 hours in total)

1. Guides Meeting- Instructor Demonstration (1 hour)
2. Client Care Discussion (2 hours)
3. Leave No Trace Discussion (1 hour)
4. Navigation and time Management (2 hours)
5. 5th class techniques and station management with two clients and one rope. (2 hours)
6. Short Roping and Short Pitching on rock (2 hours)

Day 3 (10 hours in total)

1. Guides Meeting (.5 hour)
2. Snow and Alpine Ice Equipment Selection (1 hour)
3. Snow Climbing without crampons (1 hour)
4. Crampon and Ice Axe Techniques (1.5 hours)

5. Short Roping on Snow (2 hours)
6. Snow and Alpine Ice Anchors (2 hours)
7. Pitched climbing on alpine ice and snow (2 hours)

Day 4 (10 hours in total)

1. Guides Meeting (1 hour)
2. Roping-up Techniques for Glacier Travel (2 hours)
3. Short Roping to Glacier Travel Transitions (2 hours)
4. Crevasse Rescue (3 hours)
5. Short Roping and Short Pitching on snow (2 hours)

Day 5 (10 hours in total)

1. Guides Meeting (1 hour)
2. Overview of Rescue Skills (1 hour)
3. Knot Pass while Lowering (1 hour)
4. Belay Escapes (2 hours)
5. Mechanical Advantage Raises (2 hours)
6. Rope Ascending Techniques (1 hour)
7. Rescue problem-solving practicum (2 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Current AMGA member
- Current CPR Certification
- Current Wilderness First Responder (WFR) Certification or higher that meets the [Minimum Guidelines and Scope of Practice for a WFR](#)
- Successful completion of a Level I Avalanche Training and Avalanche Rescue Course
- Two years personal climbing experience on a variety of terrain that includes snow, rock and alpine
- Confidence leading 5.6 in rock shoes, at the time of the course
- Confidence on 3rd and 4th class terrain, in mountain boots, at the time of the course
- Competence in overnight backcountry camping
- Experience up to 10,000' in elevation
- Familiar with basic knots, including: figure 8, bowline, clove hitch, munter hitch, mule hitch, prusik, flat overhand, double fisherman's and klemheist
- Confidence placing traditional rock protection
- Familiar with multiple types of belaying techniques, including plates and assisted braking devices
- Familiar with ascending methods
- Familiar with mechanical advantage systems
- Familiar with LNT practices
- Documentation of lead or shared lead on 5 rock climbs rated 5.6 or harder
- Documentation of lead or shared lead on 5 ascents that include snow climbing
- Documentation of 3 overnight backcountry trips
- Successful completion of AMTL I, AMTL II, AMTL III, AMTL IV, or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Alpine Ice: Introduction or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Alpinism 2: Intermediate Mountaineering or equivalent experience

Employment after successful completion of this course includes alpine mountain guide or instructor. This program is also seen as continuing education for current guides or instructors. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

AMGA Alpine Guides Course (90 Hours)

The Alpine Guide Course (AGC) is designed to take a competent alpine climber and develop the fundamental skills she/he needs to guide in a non-glaciated alpine environment. It provides training for aspiring guides and experienced guides who work in a wide range of alpine environments including alpine rock, mixed terrain, alpine ice, and waterfall ice. The AGC emphasizes a hands-on approach to the mechanics of guiding on alpine terrain.

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

Day 1 (10 hours in total)

- Introductions and Course Overview (1 hour)
- Risk Management and Safety Briefing (1 hour)
- Risk Management Discussion (2 hours)
- Professionalism (1 hour)
- Navigation and Time/Route Planning (2 hours)
- Short-Roping Review and Instructor Demo (2 hours)
- Guides' Meeting — Instructor Demo (1 hour)

Day 2 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting — Instructor Demo (1 hour)
- Building and Using Alpine Rock Anchors (1 hour)
- Alpine Belay Techniques (1 hour)
- Transitions from Short-Roping to 5th Class Systems using One Rope (1 hour)
- Transitions from Short-Roping to Technical Descents using One Rope (1 hour)
- Alternate Descending Systems; Equivocation Hitch and Pull Cords (1 hour)
- Short-Rope Testing (2 hours)
- Instructor Demo Climbing/Descending Circuit (1 hour)
- Evening Guides' Meeting — Instructor Demo (1 hour)

Day 3 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting — Participant Led (1 hour)
- Participant Led Guided Rock Climbs (8 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting — Participant Led (1 hour)

Day 4 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Equipment Selection (1 hour)
- Snow Climbing without Crampons (1 hour)
- Crampon and Ice Axe Technique Short-Roping on Snow (1 hour)
- Snow Anchors (1 hour)
- Pitched Climbing on Snow (2 hours)
- Crevasse Rescue Introduction and Participant Practice (2 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

Day 5 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Participant Led Guided Alpine Climb (8 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

Day 6 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Participant Led Guided Alpine Climb (7 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Gear, Fuel & Food Selection for Multi-Day Alpine Climb (1 hour)

Day 7 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Participant Led Approach for a Multi-Day Alpine Climb (8 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

Day 8 (10 hours in total)

- Morning Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Participant Led Alpine Climb and Descent to Trailhead (8 hours)
- Evening Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

Day 9 (10 hours in total)

- Review Session (3 hours)
- Group Debrief (4 hours)
- Individual Interviews and Debrief (3 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Current AMGA member
- Current CPR Certification
- Current Wilderness First Responder (WFR) Certification or higher that meets the [Minimum Guidelines and Scope of Practice for a WFR](#)
- Successful completion of a Level I Avalanche Training and Avalanche Rescue Course, or AMGA approved Level II
- For details on the updated avalanche education framework introduced in the 2017/18 season, please click [here](#).
- Successful completion of the Rock Guide Course or the Alpine Skills Course (for non-IFMGA track guides)
- Confidence leading 5.8 in rock shoes and 5.6 in mountain boots (with or without crampons), at the time of the course
- Confidence leading AI/WI 3, at the time of the course
- Confidence leading moderate mixed terrain in the alpine environment, at the time of the course
- Confidence with French Technique on firm 40 degree snow, at the time of the course
- Familiar with basic knots, including: figure 8, bowline, clove hitch, munter hitch, mule hitch, prusik, flat overhand, double fisherman's and klemheist

- Familiar with placing ice, snow, and rock protection and anchor construction
- Competence with map and compass
- Familiar with LNT practices
- Documentation of lead or shared lead on 25 different alpine routes in at least 2 different areas (e.g., Cascades and Alaska). Of these 25 routes, 10 are classic alpine routes rated 5.6 or harder and Grade III or longer, 5 include snow, ice or mixed climbing, 5 are alpine climbs rated 5.6 or harder that were climbed in mixed conditions with boots and crampons, 5 are ice routes rated WI 3 or harder.
- Successful completion of AMTL I, AMTL II, AMTL III, AMTL IV, or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Alpine Ice: Introduction or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Alpinism 2: Intermediate Mountaineering or equivalent experience

Employment after successful completion of this course includes advanced level alpine mountain guide or instructor. This program is also seen as continuing education for current guides or instructors. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

AMGA Rock Guide Course (100 Hours)

This is the entry-level course for the Rock Guide and Alpine Guide programs and the Rock Instructor Certification. The Rock Guide Course (RGC) was designed for aspiring guides who have a strong rock climbing background and for instructors who are interested in improving their skills and increasing knowledge. The RGC trains aspiring guides on routes up to Grade III and 5.9 while emphasizing risk management and client rewards. You are expected to arrive with a strong recreational climbing background with an acquired knowledge of knots, belaying, anchors, protection strategies, and climbing systems. It is assumed that you can lead the climbs listed on the submitted resume and that you are physically, mentally, and emotionally prepared for a week of outdoor activity.

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

Day 1 (10 hours in total)

- Introductions and Course Overview (.5 hour)
- AMGA / IFMGA Overview (.5 hour)
- Risk Management Discussion and Safety Briefing for Course (.5)
- Professionalism (1 hour)
- Guides Notebook (.5 hour)
- Guides Meeting (1 hour)
- Equipment Selection / Guides Pack (1 hour)
- Knots and Hitches (1 hour)
- Protection (1 hour)
- Belay Anchors (1 hour)
- Belay Techniques (1 hour)
- Station Management (1 hour)

Day 2 (10 hours in total)

- Guides Meeting – Instructor Demonstration (1 hour)
- Leave No Trace Discussion (1 hour)
- Techniques for Multiple Client Guiding (2 hours)
- Lowering Techniques (2 hour)
- Rappelling Techniques Transitions and Rope Management Efficiency (2 hours)
- Station Management Practice up and down on 1 – 2 pitch climbs (2 hours)

Day 3 (10 hours in total)

- Guides Meeting – Instructor Demonstration (.5 hour)
 - Client Care Discussion (.5 hour)
 - Considerations in Descending (2 hours)
 - Short Roping and Short Pitching (3 hours)
 - Short Roping Transitions and Guide Security (2 hours)
 - Time Management Discussion (1.5 hours)
 - End of Day Debrief (.5 hour)
- Day 4 (10 hours in total)
- Guides Meeting (1 hour)
 - Instructor Demonstration Climb (1 hour)
 - Guided Climb/s by Participants (7 hours)
 - End of Day Debrief (1 hour)
- Day 5 (10 hours in total)
- Guides Meeting (1 hour)
 - Pedagogy Discussion/Instructional Techniques for Climbing (2 hours)
 - Guided Climbs by Participants (6 hours)
 - End of Day Debrief (1 hour)
- Day 6 (10 hours in total)
- Guides Meeting (1 hour)
 - Overview of Rescue Skills (1.5 hours)
 - Knots and Hitches (1 hour)
 - Knot Pass while Lowering (1 hour)
 - Belay Escapes (1 hour)
 - Mechanical Advantage Raises (1 hour)
 - Rope Ascending Techniques (1.5 hours)
 - Rescue Problem-Solving Practicum (1 hour)
 - Demonstration and Practice Exam Rescue Skills Test (1 hour)
- Day 7 (10 hours in total)
- Guides Meeting (1 hour)
 - Multiple Client Guiding with Simul Belay Techniques (2 hours)
 - Guided Climbs by Participants (6 hours)
 - End of Day Debrief (1 hour)
- Day 8 (10 hours in total)
- Guides Meeting (1 hour)
 - Guided Climbs by Participants (7 hours)
 - End of Day Debrief (1 hour)
 - Review of Exam Testing Procedures / Mock Exam Day (1 hour)
- Day 9 (10 hours in total)
- Guides Meeting (1 hour)
 - Guided Climbs by Participants / Mock Exam Opportunity (8 hours)
 - Mock Exam – End of Day Debrief (1 hour)
- Day 10 (10 hours in total)
- Review Session (3 hours)
 - Course Group Debrief (3 hours)
 - Individual Interviews and Debrief (4 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Current AMGA member
- Current CPR Certification
- Current Wilderness First Responder (WFR) Certification or higher that meets the [Minimum Guidelines and Scope of Practice for a WFR](#)

- Five years personal rock climbing experience
- Confidence leading traditional and sport routes up to 5.9, at the time of the course
- Familiar with basic knots, including: figure 8, bowline, clove hitch, munter hitch, mule hitch, prusik, flat overhand, double fisherman's and klemheist
- Familiar with multiple types of mechanical and non-mechanical belay devices
- Familiar with a variety of rappel devices on multi-pitch rappels
- Familiar with LNT Practices
- You have led 10 traditional climbs rated 5.10a or harder on various rock types (single or multi-pitch)
- You have led or shared lead on 50 multi-pitch rock routes (10 of which are Grade III or longer)
- Successful completion of AMTL I, AMTL II, AMTL III, AMTL IV, or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue or equivalent experience
- Successful completion of the AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course or equivalent experience

Employment after successful completion of this course includes advanced level rock guide or instructor. This program is also seen as continuing education for current rock guides or instructors. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

AMGA Ski Guides Course (100 Hours)

The Ski Guide Course (SGC) is designed for skiers who wish to learn the skills and techniques used while guiding multi-day ski tours in a non-glaciated, yet possible high-mountain backcountry setting. It covers management of 3rd and 4th class terrain, technical ascents and descents, and management of multiple clients and small team rescues. Emphasis is placed on effectively managing risks and maximizing client rewards. Glacier travel, crevasse hazards and sustained technical mountaineering challenges are generally not covered in this course.

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

Day 1: (10 hours in total)

- Introductions and Course Overview (.5 hour)
- Risk Management (.5 hour)
- Professionalism (1 hour)
- Guide's Pack (1 hour)
- Downhill Guiding (1 hour)
- Mechanized Guiding and Touring Guiding (1 hour)
- Client Orientation and Hazard and Risk Briefings (1 hour)
- Avalanche Rescue Training (1 hour)
- AM Guides' Meeting (.5 hour)
- Field Weather, Snowpack and Avalanche Observation (1 hour)
- Run Lists (1 hour)
- PM Guides' Meeting (.5 hour)

Day 2: (10 hours in total)

- AM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- 1/2 Day Instructor Demo Mechanized Guiding (3 hours)
- Student Led Downhill Guiding (5 hours)
- PM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

Day 3: (10 hours in total)

- AM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Student Led Downhill Guiding (8 hours)
- PM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

Day 4: (10 hours in total)

- Track Setting and Pacing (.5 hour)
- AM Guides' Meeting (.5 hour)
- Instructor Demo 1/2 Day Guided Ski Tour (4 hours)
- Uphill Kick Turns (1.5 hour)
- Spotting and Bracing (1.5 hour)
- PM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Navigation and Time/Route Planning (1 hour)

Day 5: (10 hours in total)

- Standard Morning and Evening Weather Observations (1 hour)
- AM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Student Led Guided Ski Tours (7 hours)
- PM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

Day 6: (10 hours in total)

- AM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Student Led Guided Ski Tours (8 hours)
- PM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

Day 7: (10 hours in total)

- AM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Emergency Shelter Construction (2 hour)
- Sled Construction and Use (2 hour)
- Technical Sled Lower (2 hour)
- Introduction to Rope Work for the Ski /Splitboard Guide (2 hours)
- PM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

Day 8: (10 hours in total)

- AM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Student Led Guided Ski Tours (8 hours)
- PM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

Day 9: (10 hours in total)

- AM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)
- Student Led Guided Ski Tours (8 hours)
- PM Guides' Meeting (1 hour)

Day 10: (10 hours in total)

- Review Session (3 hours)
- Group Debrief (3 hours)
- What's Next After the SGC? (1 hour)
- Individual Interviews and Debriefs (3 hours)

PREREQUISITES:

- Current AMGA member
- Current CPR Certification
- Current Wilderness First Responder (WFR) Certification or higher that meets the [Minimum Guidelines and Scope of Practice for a WFR](#)
- Successful completion of an AMGA approved or Pro 1, or Level II
- For details on the updated avalanche education framework introduced in the 2017/18 season, please click [here](#).
- Successful completion of the Alpine Skills Course or Rock Guide Course
- Four years personal ski touring experience, including multi-day tours and peak ascents
- Confidence skiing black and double-black diamond terrain, at the time of the course
- Ability to smoothly link turns in all terrain and conditions in un-groomed backcountry snow
- Ability to ascend and descend on skis an average of 4500' - 6000' + vertical feet per day
- Ability to adjust technique to ski in diverse terrain, including sustained descents of up to 50 degrees
- Experience snow climbing with ice axe and crampons
- Comfortable with self-arrest and belay
- Ability to choose appropriate belay and rappel methods for rock and snow
- Ability to navigate in whiteout conditions
- Proficiency with multiple burial avalanche rescue (ability to consistently locate 3 buried avalanche transceivers in under 10 minutes)
- Experience with winter camping and shelter construction
- Experience with basic short roping and pitching on snow and rock
- Experience with map and compass
- Familiar with LNT practices
- You have completed 20 different ski tours (5 of which are on terrain 40 degrees or steeper, 5 of which are day tours that include at least 4500 vertical feet of ascent and descent, and 5 of which are multi-day tours using huts or ski camping) - this will be documented in your submitted resume with your application.
- **You have submitted a movement video showing your skiing/riding abilities meet the prerequisite level required**
- Movement video submission is **required for 2020 SGC** applications
- For full details and what to put in your video, please read the [SGC Video Submission Document](#) and view:
 - [AMGA SGC Movement Video | Example & Tips](#)
 - Student Submission Example: [AMGA SGC Movement Video | S. Schmitt](#)
 - [AMGA Splitboard Standard](#) | 2016 Video
- Successful completion of AMTL IV Ski option or equivalent experience

Employment options after successful completion of this course includes advanced level ski guide. This program is also seen as continuing education for current ski guides or expedition leaders. See Employment on pages 3-8 for other employment options.

As these are stand-alone programs, there is no course flow or sequence in which they need to be completed. As long as the prerequisites are met, students can take these programs as needed for job requirements and are valuable programs for continuing education for outdoor professionals.

About the American Mountain Guides Association



The American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) has been dedicated to supporting the guiding community through excellence in education, standards and certification since 1979. As a group, the AMGA presents a strong, unified voice for the high standards of professionalism in guiding and climbing instruction in the United States. The AMGA is an organization grounded in powerful tradition that continues to evolve with the ever-changing arena of mountain guiding and climbing instruction. The AMGA offers a series of training courses and exams designed to certify guides and climbing instructors to the highly respected, internationally recognized, standards of the AMGA.

The AMGA is our nation's sole representative to the 25-member International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations (IFMGA), the international governing body responsible for guiding standards and education around the world.

The heart of the American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) is its membership. Spread across the country, AMGA members represent an incredible variety of educators, outdoor enthusiasts, and environmental stewards. Just about every aspect of mountain guiding and instruction is represented through the AMGA's vast member base: from the glaciated high-altitude peaks of the Alaska Range to the big walls of Yosemite, from the diverse climbing areas in the Rockies to the world class ice and rock climbing of the East Coast. These professionals could work in any part of the industry from instructors who teach on climbing walls and single-pitch cliffs to guides guiding long rock routes, alpine climbs, and ski mountaineering trips. As a collective group, the AMGA is closely connected to almost every issue that faces the industry and our treasured crags, peaks, powder covered slopes, and frozen waterfalls.

Guiding in the mountains has been a profession in the U.S. that spans back to the start of the nation. Only in 1979 did a group of 12 guides decide that it was time to formalize an organization to represent the greater guiding community. As a result, the American Professional Mountain Guides Association was born. Over the next few years the "P" was dropped and the AMGA developed and grew throughout the United States.

The organization sharpened its focus of supporting the guiding profession by providing representation for land use access, education, training, and examination based on international standards for guiding. In 1997, the AMGA achieved one of its most notable accomplishments with acceptance into the International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations, IFMGA/UIAGM. As a member of the IFMGA, the organization's educational and certification programs meet the international standards recognized by more than 20 nations worldwide.

Today the AMGA continues to develop its programs to meet changing standards and support the growing community of guides and climbing instructors in the United States. In addition, the organization has become a resource for land managers and outdoor industry leaders by promoting land stewardship, world-class training, and sustainable practices to protect our natural resources.

The AMGA is the post-graduate school of guiding and it is where professional climbing guides go to develop their skills in order to attain the highest level of certification.

There are three disciplines of certification in the AMGA. They are Rock, Alpine and Ski. Some of the disciplines have multiple levels of certification. For example, in the rock discipline one can be certified at the Single Pitch Instructor level, the Rock Instructor level or the Guide level. In each of the disciplines, the guide level is the highest level of certification. If an individual obtains AMGA certification at the guide level in Rock, Alpine and Ski, that person will be granted the International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations (IFMGA) certification, which is the highest level of certification available for a guide.

Steps to IFMGA Certification

The American Alpine Institute does not provide all programs required for IFMGA certification. As an AMGA contractor AAI can only provide the Single Pitch Instructor Course, the AMGA Alpine Skills Course, the AMGA Alpine Guides Course, the AMGA Rock Guides Course and the AMGA Ski Guides Course.

Following are the courses that one must take to achieve IFMGA status:

Rock Guide

1. Single Pitch Instructor Course
2. Single Pitch Instructor Exam
3. Rock Guide Course
4. Advanced Rock Guides Course and Aspirant Exam
5. Rock Guide Exam

Alpine Guide

1. Alpine Skills Course (Could take the Rock Instructor Course instead)
2. Alpine Guides Course
3. Ice Instructor Course
4. Advanced Alpine Guides Course and Aspirant Exam
5. AIARE Avalanche Pro Level II
6. Alpine Guide Exam

Ski Mountaineering Guide

1. Ski Guides Course
2. Ski Mountaineering Guides Course and Aspirant Exam
3. AIARE Avalanche Pro level II
4. Ski Mountaineering Guides Exam

After you reach the guide level in each of the disciplines you will be deemed an IFMGA Certified Mountain Guide.

Aren't all guides AMGA certified?

No, guiding is both a career and a lifestyle. Some people only work as a guide for a short period of time, whereas others make their career in the mountains. The result is that those who are career driven are the ones that jump through the hoops to become certified.

Why should I try to get guide level certification?

Guide level certification comes with a number of benefits. First and foremost, one has been tested by his or her peers and has met the national standards within the industry. As a result, it is very easy to get a job.

Second, wages are higher for those who have attained guide level certification.

Third, it is easier to market yourself to prospective guests.

And fourth, it is a mark of professionalism. It shows that you take your career professionally.

American Alpine Institute **Program Policies and Admission**

Admission Standards

Students will be admitted to their desired vocational program if they meet the prerequisites outlined under that specific program's description. See Course Descriptions page 25-54.

Prior education and training will be reviewed for all students and VA education benefits recipients entering any vocational program.

Note: Applicants who are entitled to educational assistance under Chapter 31 Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment or Ch. 33 Benefits must submit a Certificate of Eligibility for entitlement to educational assistance no later than the first day of a course of education.

Please see page 69 for Title 38 United State Code Section 3679(e) explaining our school's policy.

The American Alpine Institute does not currently accept Financial Aid.

Full Time Attendance

A student is considered full-time if he or she takes a minimum of 22 hours per week.

Note: Students who are using VA education benefits for more than one program in a short timeframe should note that they will not be paid their Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) during breaks between programs as these are stand-alone programs.

Grading Policies and Program Graduation Requirements

All vocational programs have the potential for three distinct grades:

- **Pass:** Students who pass cleanly may graduate from their training and receive their certificate.
- **Conditional Pass:** Students who receive a conditional pass at the end of a program often had difficulties in one or two areas. The student will have to show proficiency in the area of weakness before moving on. The instructor will determine a time to reassess the student's weakness. The time needed to assess the weakness will be determined by the instructor and could require anywhere from one to four days. A student who receives a conditional pass will have to pay the private instructional rate during the reassessment. The private rate is \$425 per day.

- **Failure:** If a student fails a program or assessment, he or she will need to retake the course or assessment until they receive a passing grade.

Method Used to Report Grades

Students will be assessed throughout the course. The instructor working with the student will make note of advances in technical and movement skills throughout the program if applicable.

Students are expected to meet the program objective. At the end of each program, the guide will share specific notes about areas where the student has excelled and on areas where the student needs work. If a student does not meet the program objective, he or she will receive a Conditional Pass or a Failure. If they meet the objective, they will receive a passing grade and complete their training or receive their certificate.

All instructor notes on the students will be archived at the AAI administrative office.

Students are evaluated on the following every day of each technical program:

- **Course Objective:** Does the student comprehend the course objective? Would he or she be comfortable meeting the objective without oversight?
- **Risk Management:** Is the student aware of the dangers (both objective and subjective) in his or her surroundings. Does he or she take the appropriate actions to mitigate the danger?
- **Technical Systems:** Does the student have an acceptable understanding of the technical systems at this level? Does he or she know where and when the systems should be applied?
- **Navigational Skills:** Is the student navigating appropriately? Does the student use the map, compass, altimeter, GPS, route topo or guidebook appropriately? Did the student apply acceptable route-finding skills at this level of training?
- **Movement Skills:** Are the student's movement skills improving? Do his or her movement skills represent what is expected at this level of training?
- **Judgment/Mountain Sense:** Does the student demonstrate good judgment?
- **Environmental Awareness:** Does the student show an understanding of Leave No Trace climbing and travel at this level of training?
- **Professionalism:** Does the student present himself or herself as a mature individual? Does the student understand actions and comments that can be perceived as arrogant? Does the student present him or herself as a mountain professional?

Some programs have additional categories that are specific to the program.

Students will receive one of the following grades at the end of the program.

- **Pass:** The student understood the material. The student understands the concepts and how to effectively employ them in a mountain environment. This will result in completion of the training and they will receive their certificate.
- **Marginal:** The student's understanding of the material is weak. The student sometimes grasps the concepts, but it is inconsistent.
- **No Pass:** The student does not understand the material and cannot grasp the concepts.
- **N/A:** Not applicable. This would indicate that a certain skill was not observed on a given day.

A No Pass is equal to two Marginals. The length of the course determines the number of Marginals and No Passes allowed.

Following is a breakdown of the amount allowed:

- Two-Day Course – 4 or more Marginal scores or 2 or more No Pass Scores
- Three-Day Course – 5 or more Marginal scores or 3 or more No Pass Scores
- Four-Day Course – 6 or more Marginal Scores or 3 or more No Pass Scores
- Six-Day Course – 7 or more Marginal Scores or 4 or more No Pass Scores
- Twelve to Fifteen-Day Course – 10 or more Marginal Scores or 5 or more No Pass Scores

During the final evaluation at the end of each course during the student debrief, the students will be provided with their scoring cards for the course. At that point, the instructor will speak to the student about each item that needs work and develop a plan for improvement.

Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grades are given when a student is unable to complete a course because of illness, injury or another serious problem. Students who have an incomplete grade must work with a program coordinator to get into a course that will satisfy the requirements to pass the program or they must figure out how to retake the program.

Student Dismissal

Students will be dismissed from any vocational program for six possible reasons:

1. Disregard for Student or Instructor Safety

Students who flagrantly disregard safety procedures and put themselves, other students or the instructor at risk, will be asked to leave the course. The student will receive a warning before being released from the course.

2. Inability to Grasp Core Concepts

If it becomes clear to the administrators and the instructors in the field that a student is incapable of fully grasping the material – e.g. the student can't pass assessments, is incapable of applying technical systems appropriately, etc. – the student may be dismissed.

3. Inability to Meet Physical Requirements

If a student is incapable of meeting the physical requirements for the course, he/she may be dismissed. Students should have the ability to walk uphill with a backpack for 6-8 hours, and they should have the ability to climb 5.7 rock without difficulty. Students who don't meet the physical requirements may be dismissed.

All students have the option of having their physical fitness assessed prior to the start of their program. Assessments will be made on a private daily rate of \$425 per day.

4. Disregard for the AMGA Code of Ethics and Conduct

Individuals who are enrolled in any American Mountain Guides Association program will become members of the AMGA. Following is the AMGA Code of Ethics:

The American Mountain Guides Association (“AMGA”) requires all of its members to be ethical and professional in the conduct of their business and personal lives. This Code of Ethics applies to all of us who are members of the AMGA, including certified guides, instructors, accredited guide services,

aspirants and students (“Members”). Any violation of this Code of Ethics and Conduct may result in disciplinary action as set forth herein.

1. The safety and care of our clients must be our prime concern at all times. All personal objectives and the objectives of our clients must be subordinate to this concern.
2. The safety of the public is also our concern and we must, where possible and practical, provide assistance to those having difficulty by offering help, which is appropriate under the circumstances. This, however, we can do only if it does not compromise the safety of our clients.
3. Our clients have the right to expect us to be up-to-date on methods and techniques and to use appropriate and well-functioning equipment.
4. We must always be aware of our own physical, technical and experiential limitations. We must use routes and terrain which are within our expertise and capabilities.
5. As AMGA guides, whether certified, aspirant, or student, and as instructors and Members, we are expected to teach and practice Leave No Trace principles at all times and to be knowledgeable of local natural history.
6. As professionals, we must be culturally competent. We must treat clients, the public, and our fellow guides with respect. The AMGA assumes that all human beings, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexuality, or creed, are entitled to enjoy the mountains without threat of discrimination, diminution of their values and customs, or disrespect. An AMGA professional is expected to be an ambassador of human compassion and understanding.
7. At all times, we are representatives of the AMGA and should conduct ourselves in a manner that reflects well on the AMGA. This applies not only on AMGA courses, but anytime we are interacting with clients, the public, or others including government agencies. We must always strive to work within the framework of the AMGA Scope of Practice as defined by the Training and Certification Program Handbook and by Accreditation Contracts. This includes accurately and unambiguously representing the level of our certification to clients, government agencies, the public and others.
8. As AMGA guides, whether certified, aspirant or student, and as instructors and Members, we are expected to work within the permit, certification and aspirant requirements of the country and/or land agency in or under which we intend to work. We are also required to obey all laws, rules and regulations applicable to our guiding or other activities. AMGA Members should represent themselves fairly and adequately.

5. Inability to Meet the Financial Obligations of the Program

Students are required to pay all appropriate fees on time.

6. Excessive Absences

Students who miss more than 20% of their coursework may be dismissed.

The Director of Field Operations will notify the student in writing should it become necessary to dismiss the student. The dismissal letter will contain the date and the reason for dismissal. Prepaid tuition will be refunded according to the school’s refund policy.

Re-entry after Student Dismissal

A student who has been dismissed for any of the reasons above or outlined under our Code of Conduct, the student may reapply two-years after the date of his or her dismissal. The student will be required to participate in a Placement Assessment prior to continuing on with a vocational program.

During the Placement Assessment, the instructor who evaluates the student will address the reason for the student's dismissal and ensure that there will not be a reoccurrence. There is no probationary period. Upon re-admittance, the student is expected to operate as if they had not left the program.

If the student was dismissed due to unsatisfactory grades (the inability to grasp core concepts) or the inability to meet physical requirements, the student may reapply six months after the date of his or her dismissal. There is no probationary period.

The student will be required to participate in a Placement Assessment prior to continuing on with a vocational program. During the Placement Assessment, the instructor who evaluates the student will address the reason for the student's dismissal and ensure that there will not be a reoccurrence. Upon re-admittance, the student is expected to operate as if they had not left the program.

If there is a second incident, the student will not be allowed reentry.

Code of Conduct

The following conduct is also unacceptable, will not be tolerated, and will result in dismissal:

1. Disregard for student or instructor safety.
2. All forms of bias including race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, national origin, and creed as demonstrated through verbal and/or written communication and/or physical acts.
3. All types of proven dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, knowingly furnishing false information to the institution, etc.
4. Intentional disruption or obstruction of teaching, administration, disciplinary proceedings, public meetings and programs, or other program activities.
5. Theft or damage to school or student property.
6. Violation of law during coursework on public lands or on school property. This includes, but is not limited to, the abuse of alcoholic beverages or controlled dangerous substances.

Student Complaint/Appeal Process

Students who have a complaint or who would like to appeal a dismissal must request in writing an appointment for an interview with the Director of Field Operations. The request should include the following:

1. Student's full name and current address
2. A statement of the concern including dates, times, instructors, and if applicable, other students involved
3. Date of complaint letter and signature of the student
4. Three dates in which the student would be available for a meeting with the Director.

The Director will notify the student in writing of the appointment date in which the concerns or appeal will be addressed. Every effort will be made to bring an amicable closure to the concern. Should it be necessary, a panel of instructors will hear the concerns and will be asked to assist in bringing a resolution to concerns and/or appeals. The student will be notified in writing within five business days of the outcome of the meetings. Should the contract be cancelled by either the student or the school, the last day of attendance will be used as the date to calculate any refund in accordance with the school's refund policy. Nothing prevents the student from contacting the Workforce Board (the state licensing agency) at 360-753-5662 at any time with a concern or a complaint.

Student Records

Student records are maintained for fifty years. To obtain a copy of one's records, students should contact the American Alpine Institute administrative office.

Tardiness, Absences, Make-Up Work, Interruptions for Unsatisfactory Attendance

Student tardiness will not be tolerated, as it will have a significant impact on the day. Being on time is a "core concept" to being an outdoor professional. If an instructor says that the team needs to be ready to leave camp by 1am, then the students should be ready. A great deal has gone into that decision and being late may compromise the group's safety mean not succeeding on the climb. Running late may result in a "No Pass" on the daily scoring card in the Risk Management or Judgment section.

Tardiness at the start of a course may also result in an unsatisfactory mark on the scorecard.

If a student misses a day or a series of days due to illness or tragedy, the time may be made up on private days at the private rate.

Being on time and showing up are "core concepts." Students must not have unexplained absences.

It is strongly suggested that all students obtain travel insurance. If you are injured training for a course or while on a program, you may not be able to continue. It is unlikely that the airlines or other travel related fees will be able to be reimbursed without such insurance.

Administrators at AAI can provide assistance in obtaining travel insurance.

Leave of Absence

Students may be granted a leave of absence upon request. The following guidelines must be used:

1. The request for a leave of absence must be submitted to the school in writing.
2. The request must have the date that the student will begin the leave and the expected date of return to coursework.
3. Should a leave request take a student beyond the contracted completion date, the student may be subject to re-entry under an amended contract. If the student does not reenter within the contracted schedule and does not arrange for a contract amendment, then his or her contract will be terminated. The student may be entitled to a refund in accordance with the school's refund policy.

Academic Advising

Academic advising is available from the Executive Director, Director of Operations, School Certifying Official, or the Pacific Northwest Program Coordinator.

Counseling Services

The American Alpine Institute does not provide counseling services.

Placement Services

The American Alpine Institute does not provide job placement assistance. But we do offer employment resources. See pages 59-61.

Compliance with VA's 85/15 Rule

As per USC 360A(d)(1), the American Alpine Institute must limit student enrollment to 85% veteran enrollment per cohort. In the event that a veteran wishes to enroll in a class that has already reached the 85% cap, he or she may do that, but will not be eligible for VA funding. Chapter 35 and 31 students may still enroll even if the 85 percent has been realized.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords eligible students certain rights with respect to their education records. These rights include:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the American Alpine Institute receives a request for access. A student should submit a written request that identifies the record(s) the student wishes to inspect to the Director or the Northwest Program Coordinator. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. A student who wishes to ask the school to amend a record should write the school and clearly identify the part of the record the student wants changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested, the school will notify the student in writing of the decision and the student's right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
The school discloses education records without a student's prior written consent under the FERPA exception for disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the American Alpine Institute in an administrative or instructional role. A school official may also include a volunteer or contractor outside of the American Alpine Institute who performs an institutional service. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities for the American Alpine Institute.
- Parents and spouses of students are advised that information contained in education records, with the exception of directory information, will not be disclosed to them without the prior written consent of the student.

Religious Accommodation

The American Alpine Institute will make good faith efforts to provide reasonable religious accommodations to students who have sincerely held religious practices or beliefs that conflict with a scheduled course/program requirement. Students requesting a religious accommodation should make the request, in writing, directly to their instructor with as much advance notice as possible. Being absent from class or other educational responsibilities does not excuse students from keeping up with any information shared or expectations set during the missed class. Students are responsible for obtaining materials and information provided during any class missed. The student shall work with the instructor to determine a schedule for making up missed work.

Examples of religious accommodations may include: rescheduling of an exam or giving a make-up exam for the student in question; altering the time of a student's presentation; allowing extra-credit assignments to substitute for missed class work or arranging for an increased flexibility in assignment due dates; and releasing a graduate assistant from teaching or research responsibilities on a given day.

Financial Considerations

The costs of the vocational programs are as follows:

- Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part I (\$2775, transportation and camping fees provided)
- Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part II (\$2925, transportation and camping fees provided)
- Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part III (\$3175, transportation and camping fees provided)
- Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part IV (\$3295 for Ptarmigan Traverse option or \$4450, transportation and camping fees provided)
- Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue (\$685, transportation and camping fees provided)
- Alpine Ice Climbing: Introduction (\$1525, transportation and camping fees provided)
- Alpinism 1 Introduction to Mountaineering (\$1425, transportation and camping fees provided)
- Alpinism 2 Intermediate Mountaineering (\$1560, transportation and camping fees provided)
- AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course (\$585, no transportation or camping fees provided. Must become a member of the American Mountain Guides Association - \$80 per year*)
- Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive (\$2875, transportation provided, no lodging provided)
- Wilderness First Responder (\$755, no transportation or camping fees provided)
- Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator (\$785, no transportation or camping fees provided)
- Leave No Trace Trainer (\$350, transportation and camping fees provided)
- Leave No Trace Master Educator (\$845, transportation and camping fees provided after day one)
- Avalanche Level I and Rescue Skills (\$610, no transportation or lodging fees provided)
- Avalanche Pro Level I (\$1465, no transportation or lodging fees provided)
- AMGA Alpine Skills Course (\$1750, no transportation or camping fees provided. Must be a member of the American Mountain Guides Association - \$80 per year*)
- AMGA Alpine Guide Course (\$2850, no transportation or camping fees provided. Must be a member of the American Mountain Guides Association - \$80 per year*)
- AMGA Rock Guide Course (\$2950, no transportation or camping fees provided. Must be a member of the American Mountain Guides Association - \$80 per year*)
- AMGA Ski Guide Course (\$3150, no transportation or camping fees provided. Must be a member of the American Mountain Guides Association - \$80 per year*)

*NOTE for VA Education Benefits Students – Membership in the American Mountain Guides Association is not covered by VA Education Benefits.

Group equipment is included in all programs. However, students will be required to provide their own personal equipment (see Appendix B). Food is not provided on any of the courses.

Some courses cover both camping fees and transportation. On others, these things are excluded. Please see the chart above to see where these exclusions apply.

Additional exclusions include: lodging before and after a program, travel insurance, transportation to and from a program starting point, AMGA membership, textbooks and guide gratuities.

Financial Aid

The American Alpine Institute does not currently have a financial aid or financial assistance plan.

Scholarships

AAI currently provides scholarship opportunities to members of the [Association for Outdoor Recreation and Education \(AORE\)](#). Individuals interested in applying for a scholarship should do so through that organization.

Women interested in a guide career may apply for the Guide Like Liz scholarship at the [AAI website](#).

Credit for Previous Training

Every student will need to meet the prerequisites of any course they wish to enroll in and will need to provide an outdoor resume that outlines previous training, experience, and certifications. Prior education and training will be reviewed for all students and VA education benefits recipients entering any vocational program.

Refund Policy

Following is a breakdown of the policies concerning student refunds:

Vocational Programs

Most AAI courses range in size from seven to ten participants down to just a few students depending on the course and student to instructor ratios. With such small groups, individual cancellations and withdrawals can seriously affect the finances of the program, and the below policy has been established to protect the students from the cancellation of their course because of late withdrawals by others and to cover the planning, administration, logistical, and other costs experienced by AAI.

1. AAI will refund all monies if an applicant is not accepted.
2. If a program does not run, all monies will be refunded.
3. If an applicant cancels within 5 business days (excluding Sundays and holidays) after the day the contract is signed or an initial payment is made, all monies will be refunded – unless the student has begun training.
4. Final tuition payment is due 90 days prior to the beginning of the course. Non-payment of fees on the date they are due shall constitute cancellation.
5. AAI will retain a registration fee of \$300 if the applicant cancels after the fifth business day after signing the contract or making an initial payment. A "registration fee" is any fee charged by a school to process student applications and establish a student records system.
6. If the applicant registers for more than one vocational program, this registration fee acts as a floating registration fee. The applicant needs to pay only one registration fee of \$300. Once the first course is completed, the same \$300 is applied to the second course's registration fee and so on. Once the training is complete or the applicant has finished their desired courses for training, the floating registration fee of \$300 will be refunded to the applicant.
7. If the applicant cancels with written notice more than 90 days prior to the start date of the course, AAI will refund the applicant the full tuition, minus the registration fee.
8. If the applicant cancels with written notice 60-89 days prior to the start date of the course, half the course tuition is forfeited.
9. If the applicant cancels with written notice less than 60 days prior to the course start date, the full course tuition is forfeited.
10. If the applicant cancels with less than 90 days and AAI is able to fill the applicant's spot, AAI will refund the applicant the full tuition, minus the registration fee.
11. When calculating refunds, the official date of a student's termination is the last date of recorded attendance. This may be as follows:
 - When the school receives notice of the student's intention to discontinue the training programs.
 - When the student is terminated for a violation of a published school policy, which provides for termination.
 - When a student, without notice, fails to attend courses for thirty calendar days.

Refund Policy for VA Students

The American Alpine Institute agrees that if a veteran student fails to enter the course, withdraws, or is discontinued at any time prior to completion of the course, the unused portion of paid tuition, fees, and other charges will be refunded or the debt for such tuition, fees, and other charges will be canceled on a prorated basis, as follows:

(1) Registration fee. An established registration fee in an amount not to exceed \$10 need not be subject to proration. Where the established registration fee is more than \$10, the amount in excess of \$10 will be subject to proration.

(2) Breakage fee. Where the school has a breakage fee, it may provide for the retention of only the exact amount of the breakage, with the remaining part, if any, to be refunded.

(3) Consumable instructional supplies. Where the school makes a separate charge for consumable instructional supplies, as distinguished from laboratory fees, the exact amount of the charges for supplies consumed may be retained but any remaining part must be refunded.

(4) Books, supplies and equipment.

a. The school will make a refund in full for the amount of the charge for unissued books, supplies and equipment when:

- The school furnishes the books, supplies and equipment,
- The school includes their cost in the total charge payable to the school for the course,
- The veteran or eligible person withdraws or is discontinued before completing the course.

b. The veteran or eligible person may dispose of issued items at his or her discretion even if they were included in the total charges payable to the school for the course.

(5) Tuition and other charges. Where the school either has or adopts an established policy for the refund of the unused portion of tuition, fees, and other charges subject to proration, which is more favorable to the veteran or eligible person than the approximate pro rata basis as provided in this paragraph, such established policy will be applicable. Otherwise, the school may charge a sum which does not vary more than 10 percent from the exact pro rata portion of such tuition, fees, and other charges that the length of the completed portion of the course bears to its total length. The exact proration will be determined on the ratio of the number of days of instruction completed by the student to the total number of instructional days in the course.

(6) Prompt refund. In the event that the veteran, spouse, surviving spouse or child fails to enter the course, or withdraws, or is discontinued there from at any time prior to completion of the course, the unused portion of the tuition, fees and other charges paid by the individual shall be refunded promptly. Any institution which fails to forward any refund due within 40 days after such a change in status, shall be deemed, prima facie, to have failed to make a prompt refund, as required by this subparagraph.

Discontinued Programs

1. If instruction in any program is discontinued or if a program area is changed in such a way that it provides financial hardship on the student, AAI will:
 - Provide pro rata refunds of all tuition and fees paid; or
 - Arrange for a comparable training at another public or private vocational school. Students must accept comparable training in writing.
2. If AAI plans to discontinue a program, it will notify affected students and the Washington Workforce Board in advance. This will be done in writing and students will receive a reimbursement 90 days in advance of the cancellation.

Withdrawing from School

Students must prepare written notification and submit it to a Program Coordinator. This document must contain the student's name, address, and date. All financial obligations on the part of the school and the student will be calculated using the last recorded date of attendance.

Academic Calendar and Program Planning

Our vocational programs can be taken as needed. Some require a winter environment and some a summer environment while other programs with mostly classroom time can be taken year-round.

Administrative Offices and Operations

AAI Administrative Offices are open Monday-Friday from 9am to 5:30pm, Pacific Time. The office is closed on weekends and on federal holidays.

AAI program are run throughout the year. Some programs are intentionally run over holidays in order to take advantage of time off. Most vocational programs have set program dates that can be found at the AAI website www.alpineinstitute.com.

Enrollment

Students may enroll in programs at any time. Program coordinators are available to assist you in enrollment during administrative business hours, Monday-Friday, 9am-5:30pm.

Program Offerings and Dates Offered

Following is a seasonal breakdown of when programs are offered. To view the exact dates, please log onto the American Alpine Institute website at www.alpineinstitute.com. Under the Programs tab on our home page, you can find all of our programs. We list the different categories of training offered under Courses. Each vocational program is listed under the specific type of training and each vocational program has its own site. On each course's site, we list the current dates available found under the tab labeled "Dates".

- Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part I – This program is offered every two weeks from early May through late September.
- Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part II – This program is offered eight times throughout the summer climbing season. It is offered every two weeks from late May through early September.
- Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part III – This program is offered several times throughout the summer season. The bulk of the courses are offered in July and August.
- Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Part IV – This program is offered twice throughout the summer season and once in the winter season. The first option in April takes students on skis into the North Cascades. The second offering in July takes students to the Ptarmigan Traverse in the North Cascades. And the third option in July takes students to Mount Waddington.
- Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue Course – This course is offered about every other week from early May to late August.
- Alpine Ice Climbing: Introduction Course – This course is offered about every other week from mid-May to early September.
- Alpinism 1: Introduction to Mountaineering – This course is offered every week starting in late early May to late September.
- Alpinism 2: Intermediate Mountaineering – This course is offered every two weeks from early May to mid-September.
- Leave No Trace Trainer Course – This program runs four times between May and October in the Cascades. Occasionally it runs in other ranges as well.
- Leave No Trace Master Educator Course – This program runs once a year in July or August in the Pacific Northwest.

- Wilderness First Responder – This program is slated to run twice a summer season in the Cascades. It is set-up in such a way that it could be taken in conjunction with an AMTL II or AMTL III course. Though this program runs twice in the Cascades, there are many additional dates all over the United States. Consult with an AAI program coordinator for more details.
- Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator – This program runs four times a year between April and October in the Pacific Northwest.
- AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course – These courses are run in both the Cascades of Washington State and in Red Rock Canyon just outside of Las Vegas. AAI runs four to six programs a year. If you would like to combine this with another program, inquire with a program coordinator and it will be set-up to accommodate your schedule.
- Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive – This program is run twice a year, once in early summer and once in early fall.
- Avalanche Level I and Rescue Skills – These courses run every weekend from the first weekend of December through the first weekend of March.
- Avalanche Pro Level I – These courses run once to twice a year depending on conditions. The first is in mid-December and the second is in mid-February if it does run twice.
- AMGA Alpine Skills Course, AMGA Rock Guide Course, AMGA Alpine Guide Course and AMGA Ski Guide Course – These programs run year-round depending on where you take them.

Programs Offered by Month

<u>January</u>	Avalanche Level I, Wilderness First Responder, AMGA Ski Guide Course
<u>February</u>	Avalanche Level I, Avalanche Pro Level I, Wilderness First Responder, AMTL IV, AMGA Ski Guide Course
<u>March</u>	Avalanche Level I, Single Pitch Instructor Course, AMGA Rock Guides Course, AMGA Ski Guides Course
<u>April</u>	Single Pitch Instructor Course, Wilderness First Responder, AMTL IV, AMGA Rock Guides Course, Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive, Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator
<u>May</u>	AMTL I, AMTL II, AMTL III, Leave No Trace Trainer, Wilderness First Responder, AMGA Rock Guide Course, AMGA Alpine Skills Course, Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator, Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue, Alpine Ice, Alpinism 1, Alpinism 2
<u>June</u>	AMTL I, AMTL II, AMTL III, Leave No Trace Trainer, Single Pitch Instructor Course, Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive, Wilderness First Responder, AMGA Alpine Skills Course, Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator, Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue, Alpine Ice, Alpinism 1, Alpinism 2
<u>July</u>	AMTL I, AMTL II, AMTL III, AMTL IV, Leave No Trace Trainer, Wilderness First Responder, Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator, Leave No Trace Master Educator, Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue, Alpine Ice, Alpinism 1, Alpinism 2
<u>August</u>	AMTL I, AMTL II, AMTL III, Leave No Trace Trainer, Single Pitch Instructor Course, Wilderness First Responder, AMGA Alpine Skills Course, AMGA Alpine Guide Course, Leave No Trace Master Educator, Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator, Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue, Alpine Ice, Alpinism 1, Alpinism 2
<u>September</u>	AMTL I, AMTL II, Leave No Trace Trainer, Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive, Wilderness First Responder, AMGA Alpine Guides Course, AMGA Rock Guide Course, Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator, Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue, Alpine Ice, Alpinism 1, Alpinism 2
<u>October</u>	Leave No Trace Trainer, Technical Rope Rescue Comprehensive, Wilderness First Responder, AMGA Rock Guide Course, Professionalism for the Outdoor Educator
<u>November</u>	Leave No Trace Trainer, Single Pitch Instructor Course, Wilderness First Responder
<u>December</u>	Avalanche Level I, Avalanche Pro Level I, Single Pitch Instructor Course, Wilderness First Responder

Holiday Schedule

Field programs are **not** interrupted by holidays.

The American Alpine Institute Office is closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day - January 1
- Memorial Day - May 28
- 4th of July - July 4
- Labor Day - September 3
- Thanksgiving - November 22 & 23
- Christmas Day - December 25

Title 38 United State Code Section 3679(e)

American Alpine Institute permits any individual who is entitled to educational assistance under Chapter 31 or Chapter 33 to attend or participate in the course of education during the period beginning on the date on which the individual provides to AAI a certificate of eligibility for entitlement to educational assistance under Chapter 31 or 33 and ending on the earlier of the following dates:

- The date on which payment from VA is made to AAI
- 90 day after the date AAI certified tuition and fees following the receipt of the certificate of eligibility.

AAI ensures that there will not be any imposed penalty, including the assessment of late fees, the denial of access to programs, or the requirement that those receiving Ch. 31 or 33 benefits borrow additional funds, on any Ch. 31 or Ch. 33 recipient because of the individual's inability to meet their financial obligations to AAI due to the delayed disbursement funding from VA under Ch. 31 or Ch. 33.

Appendix A
Outdoor Professional
Employment Resources

The American Alpine Institute does not provide placement assistance. However, we have prepared this list of job resources for those who have completed vocational programs:

AAI Vocational Training Facebook Page

AAI administrators update the AAI Vocational Training Facebook Page with current job openings around the country and the world that require skills and certifications obtained in our vocational programs.

AMGA Newsletter

After you complete your AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course, you will be placed on the American Mountain Guides Association email list. The AMGA's monthly newsletter includes listings for mountain guide and climbing instructor jobs.

The AMGA jobs focus tends to lean heavily toward for-profit guide services.

AMGA Professional Members Forum

The AMGA has an active Facebook page for those who have completed courses beyond the Single Pitch level. Jobs are regularly posted in this forum.

AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Facebook Page

The AMGA has an active Facebook page for those who have completed their AMGA Single Pitch Instructor course. There are jobs regularly posted on the page.

AORE Listserv

The Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education was designed to bring together outdoor professionals in the college recreation, college outdoor pursuits programs, and military recreation programs for an annual conference. The yearly conference was designed for academic outdoor professionals to network and trade ideas.

The AORE has a listserv that has an academic focus, and many of the jobs are at universities or community colleges.

There is an annual fee to become a member of the AORE community.

www.aore.org

Backdoor Jobs

The backdoor jobs website is devoted to adventure tourism jobs which includes climbing and mountaineering, but also covers raft guides, backpacking guides, and mountainbiking guides.

www.backdoorjobs.com/adventure.html

Chronicle of Higher Education

This is a university jobs board that focuses heavily on academic jobs.

www.chronicle.com

Military Recreation Jobs

As the military is extremely broad, so are the job resources. Following are a select few websites where you may find job outdoor recreation job opportunities:

www.armymwr.com

www.navymwr.org

www.nafjobs.org

www.usajobs.gov

NOLS Jobs Announcements

The NOLS Jobs Announcements is a listserv designed for outdoor professionals. It provides information on some NOLS related jobs, but the majority of the listings are for adventure education jobs throughout the United States and Canada.

This listserv looks like it was designed with NOLS alumni in mind. However, it does not appear to discriminate against those who have not taken a NOLS course.

This is an extremely active jobs board, with dozens of new postings coming through almost every single day\.

<http://www.nols.edu/alumni/contact/listservservices.php>

Northwest Information Exchange

The Northwest Information Exchange is a place where guides in the Pacific Northwest trade information about current conditions in the mountains. However, guide service owners and staffing managers regularly post open positions on the listserv.

You will need to be actively working as a guide or instructor somewhere in order to get access to the listserv.

<http://groups.google.com/group/nw-information-exchange?pli=1>

Outdoor Adventure Professional Network

This particular site posts jobs in all of the outdoor disciplines:

<http://adventurejobs.co/>

Outdoor Ed

The Outdoor Ed website is a job listing website that provides information on both seasonal and year-round adventure tourism jobs. Mountaineering and rock instruction jobs are regularly highlighted on the site.

<http://www.outdoored.com>

Outdoor Industry Jobs

This website is a dumping ground of outdoor industry related jobs. There are some adventure educator and guide jobs on the site, but many of the jobs are retail and gear representation.

www.outdoorindustryjobs.com

Rock Climbing Jobs

This site focuses on rock climbing jobs at adventure summer camps.

www.rockclimbingjobs.com

San Juan Information Exchange

This is a guide conditions listserv like the Northwest Information Exchange. However, the focus of this exchange is the Ouray/Telluride/Silverton/Durango area of Colorado. Occasionally employment requests are sent out through the listserv.

Like the Northwest Exchange, you must be an active guide to obtain access to the site.

<http://groups.google.com/group/San-Juan-information-exchange/sub?s=uxs8vhQAAAr2AL9fC1xjnnYN2CEvqYaF4EHo1NeLQyTtpbF12bO8g&hl=en>

Appendix B **Sample Equipment List**

This equipment list has been developed specifically for the conditions you will experience in the Cascade Mountains during the summer mountaineering season. This is a sample list that will be similar to a list you will be issued for Alpine Mountaineering and Technical Leadership Programs. At the end of this section you will find some additional equipment that is required for your avalanche courses and your Single Pitch Instructor courses.

The equipment you bring must function well in a wide variety of conditions. Our ethos is “light is right” not “weight is great”. While each piece of gear you bring is crucial to your success and safety, what you leave out of your pack can benefit you in similar ways by lightening your load, allowing you to move quickly and efficiently over alpine terrain. Our aim is to have you bring only the essential gear for your mountain adventures. We want you to be able to pack the vast majority of the items on this gear list inside your backpack; furthermore, we would like you to bring the smallest backpack that still allows you to carry what is necessary.

Temperatures and weather conditions in the summer Cascades often change from minute to minute. A common weather prediction states, "If you can't see the mountains it's raining, and if you can see them it's going to rain." When the sun comes out, it's glorious, and occasionally quite hot. Rain can fall at any time of year, and it is possible to get snow down below timberline before the beginning of July and after about mid-September. Nighttime low temperatures often drop to slightly below freezing while daytime highs range anywhere from 35°F to 70°F. Mountain breezes are not uncommon and should be taken into consideration when planning your clothing system.

Please take the time to carefully prepare and understand your equipment. If possible, it is best to use it in the field beforehand, perhaps on a backpacking trip or training hike. Take the time to properly label and identify all items of personal gear. Many items that climbers bring are almost identical. Your name on a garment tag or a piece of colored tape on carabiners and miscellaneous items are easy ways to label your gear; fingernail polish is universally excellent. If using tape or colored markers, make sure your labeling method is durable and water resistant.

On the AMTL programs, we visit several different climbing areas in the North Cascades. We occasionally car camp, but often backpack into a base camp where we may spend up to 4 or 5 nights. While we won't have access to a place to purchase freeze dried food when we're not in the mountains, we will stop at grocery stores whenever we need to. We may also go out to dinner at some point throughout the duration of the course. When we move camp into the mountains, participants normally pair up to save weight on tents and stoves. Travel clothes and various odds and ends that you won't need during your course can be left in the AAI office. It is common to use your travel luggage or a duffel and lock for storing these items at AAI.

When preparing your equipment for travel to the Cascades, please remember that lighters and stove fuel are not allowed on aircraft. Stoves that have been thoroughly cleaned can be put in your checked baggage. Protect your equipment by covering your ice axe, crampons, and trekking poles with cardboard or other protection to prevent puncturing or tearing less durable equipment.

AAI carries products in all the categories and classifications listed below; these can be viewed and purchased on our Equipment Services website at <http://www.guideschoice.com>. Our Equipment Services staff is available to speak with you via phone or email to answer your questions about equipment for your course.

Clothing System

T-shirt: Bring two. Light colors are best. These can be synthetic or cotton. If you plan to hike in it, synthetic is better. A cotton shirt can be a nice break from the synthetics while at camp.

Weight: 3 - 7oz / 85 - 200 grams

Materials: Synthetic, cotton, blends

Shorts: Lightweight shorts are nice for warm days and hiking into camp.

Weight: 4 - 8oz / 110 - 227 grams

Comfortable Clothing: Bring a set or two of comfortable clothing for use while car camping.

Base Layer Top: This will be your base layer and should be “lightweight” or “silk weight” synthetic or wool. Cotton is not allowed. If hot temperatures or substantial sun exposure is expected, light colors will feel cooler than dark colors.

Weight: 5 - 8oz / 140 - 225 grams

Materials: Synthetic, wool.

Base Layer Bottom: Look for the same features as your Base Layer Top.

Weight: 5 - 8oz / 140 - 225 grams

Materials: Synthetic, wool.

Undergarments: Most climbers wear undergarments underneath their base layer.

Materials: Synthetic, wool

2nd Layer Top: A lightweight fleece or wind shirt. A chest pocket is a helpful feature of this multi-use layer.

Weight: 13 - 16oz / 368-454 grams

Materials: Nylon, micro weave fabrics, fleece, wind stopper

Soft Shell Jacket: A thin, light, stretchy, breathable but wind and snow-resistant layer that is comfortable to wear is ideal. This will be your 'action layer' and the outer layer that you spend the most time in. Hoods are optional but highly recommended. Size your jacket to be trim fitting, but large enough to fit over your base and second layers.

Weight: 18 - 26oz / 510 - 737 grams

Materials: Schoeller, Powerstretch, Powerdry, or similar

Soft Shell Pants: Look for the same features as the Soft Shell Jacket. This will be your outermost layer most of the time for your legs. A thigh pocket is a useful feature for storing small items.

Weight: 16 - 30oz / 450 - 850 grams

Materials: Schoeller, Powerstretch, Powerdry, or similar

Shell Pants: Made of a waterproof/breathable material, your lightweight shell bottoms should have full or hip-length side zips. This should be extremely lightweight and packable. A zipper fly is a nice luxury.

Weight: 8 - 16oz / 227 - 453 grams

Materials: eVent, Gore-tex, h2No, or similar garment

Shell Jacket: This layer needs to be waterproof, breathable, and durable. Your shell should be sized to comfortably fit over your other base and mid-layers (minus your insulating layer). Choose the lightest, most packable shell that will still get the job done. You may be using your jacket every day (in warm, wet weather) or perhaps only during an occasional storm. Avoid extra pockets (one or two chest pockets is all you need), 3-layer Gore-Tex, and hanging linings. Your hood should fit over your climbing helmet.

Weight: 8 - 20oz / 227 - 566 grams

Materials: eVent, Gore-tex, h2No, or similar

Light Insulating Layer: The goal for this piece is to add warmth to your internal layering system. Depending on your clothing system, and the environment you are in, you may fit this layer underneath your shell gear (e.g. fleece sweaters) or over your shell gear (lightweight insulated jackets). If choosing fleece, pick modern fleece garments with waffle-grid patterns and avoid “windproof fleece” – it is not breathable enough. The weight and design of this piece will vary based on the other items of climbing that you are bringing.

Weight: 10 - 20oz / 283 – 566 grams

Materials: fleece, Primaloft, down

Mid-weight Insulation Jacket: Consisting of a baffled parka and optional hood, these come in many shapes, sizes and temperature ratings. If you tend to get cold easily, opt for a slightly warmer and more substantial parka.

Weight: 20 - 40oz / 566 – 1133 grams

Fill Materials: Primaloft, down

Shell Materials: nylon, epic, eVent

Fleece Gloves/Glove Liners: You wear these for much of your time on the mountain. They need to be dexterous and comfortable, but not necessarily very insulating. In wet environments such as the Cascades, two pairs are vital for when one pair gets wet.

Materials: fleece, Powerstretch, or similar

Mid-weight Fleece/Schoeller/Leather Gloves: The most desirable glove is one that is comfortable and dexterous, so that it can be worn all day. It should be durable enough (leather palms) to handle ropes, ice axes, and a bit of rock scrambling. They come in different weights, so choose the thickness or warmth that is appropriate for your expedition.

Weight: 4 – 8oz / 110 – 200 grams

Materials: softshell, windstopper fleece, leather or similar

Shell Gloves: A waterproof shell sized to fit over your liner gloves, these will be worn during any cold/stormy weather and need to be dexterous enough to manipulate carabiners, harnesses, and tie knots. The highest priority with these gloves is to keep your hands and liner gloves dry.

Weight: 6 – 10oz / 170 - 280 grams

Shell Materials: Gore-tex, Schoeller 3x, or similar

Beanie Hat/Toque: A thinner warm hat that will fit under your climbing helmet and over your balaclava.

Weight: 2 - 4oz / 56 – 112 grams

Materials: fleece, wool, windstopper, or similar

Sun hat: A baseball cap or visor serves well. Models with a “tail” are recommended for increased sun protection.

Materials: nylon or similar

Socks: Bring three complete changes. Most climbers prefer to wear a very thin liner sock underneath a thicker hiking/mountaineering sock. Adjust your sock system ahead of time to perfect your boot fit. Also bring a few pairs for use in your tennis/approach shoes.

Materials: wool, synthetic

Gaiters: Calf/knee height are recommended, though ankle high gaiters can be used most years later in the season. Check the fit of the gaiter to your boot in advance.

Weight: 4 – 12oz / 110 – 340 grams

Materials: Schoeller, nylon, Cordura

Mountaineering Boots for snow and ice: Plastic boots are STRONGLY encouraged for the North Cascades prior to July 1, when the snowpack is still wet and deep. Leather boots are suitable the rest of the season, but must be designed for heavy-duty mountaineering with full-length rigid shank. Leather

boots should be designed for use with step-in crampons. These should be broken in and thoroughly waterproofed.

***NOTE:** There are many of makes and models out there and not all are created equal. Please consult with our Equipment Shop if you are uncertain about the acceptability of your chosen model.*

Climbing Equipment

Climbing Harness: For alpine climbing, choose a harness with adjustable leg loops, and make sure it fits your body when wearing bulky clothing. A belay loop, gear loops, and light padding on the waist are desirable features.

Weight: 6 - 16oz / 170 - 453 grams

Climbing Helmet: Light weight, well ventilated, and comfortable. Models with a plastic shell are more durable, but are heavier than all foam models. Must be UIAA approved for climbing.

Belay Device: Bring an autoblocking device like the Petzl Reverso and Black Diamond ATC-Guide.

Rock Shoes: Find an “all-around” rock shoe that performs well in cracks and edging. Size them to fit comfortably so you can wear them all day.

Carabiners: Bring four locking carabiners and five non-locking carabiners.

Ice Axe: A variety of axes are suitable. Bring one that is 60 cm max – if you are over 6’. (50 cm to 55 cm preferred). A ‘positive clearance’ pick is preferred. Ice axe leashes are not required or recommended.

Ice Tool: Bring one that is 45-55 cm length. 50 cm is the preferred length for most climbing. Ideally, this tool has a hammer head and accepts replaceable picks. Modern leashless tools are acceptable if you have prior experience using them in this application. Leashes are optional on traditional tools. ***Note: This is only necessary for Parts 2 and 3***

Weight: 16 - 25oz / 453 – 700 grams

Steel Crampons: Flexible or semi-flexible. Step-in crampons are easier to put on with cold fingers, but they are not compatible with all boots. Only modern strap on, step-in, or ‘pneumatic’ crampons are acceptable. Older Scottish style strap-on crampons are not adequate.

Prusiks: Prusiks are specially tied loops of 6mm cord used for crevasse rescue. If you don’t have a set of prusiks from a previous AAI course bring three lengths of 6 mm perlon/nylon: 13 feet, 6 feet, and 5 feet. (Precut lengths are available for sale at AAI.) Cord thicker than 6mm will not work.

Trekking Poles: At least one pole is required and two are recommended. Even if you don’t normally use trekking poles, at least one is necessary to help with balance while carrying heavy packs on mountainous terrain and crossing streams.

Camping Equipment

Tent: A lightweight, 4-season, two-person tent is recommended. It should be able to withstand multi-day, continuous rain. When deciding what tent to bring, it is worth trying to go as light as possible. Single wall models are lighter, but suffer more from condensation than heavier double wall models. Generally, your shelter should weigh no more than 3 lbs. per person. During the rendezvous, we will figure out the best way to divide up tent weights and gear.

Weight: 3.5 – 5.5lbs / 1.6 – 2.5 kg

Sleeping Bag: Rated to around 25°F from late June to mid-September. Bring a 15° to 20° for early and late season trips. Down is less weight and bulk, but more expensive and it requires more care to keep dry.

If you purchase a down sleeping bag, do not buy a bag with Gore-tex on the outside – it keeps all the moisture and sweat in the bag and ultimately gets the bag quite wet.

Weight: 16 – 42oz / 453 – 1200 grams

Materials: Down, Primaloft, Polarguard 3D

Compression Stuff Sack: Used to shrink your sleeping bag into the smallest size possible.

Weight: 2-4oz / 56 – 110 grams

Materials: SilNylon, eVent, or similar

Sleeping Pad: Bring one pad – preferably a lightweight inflatable pad. Closed cell foam pads are suitable, but will add bulk to your pack. Please bring a patch kit for inflatable pads.

Weight: 8-20oz / 225 – 565 grams

Internal Frame Pack: 55-65 Liters is ideal. In early season, larger pack (up to 85L) may be brought so that more clothing can be carried. It should be comfortable for carrying loads up to 50lbs. Make sure it will hold all of your personal equipment, with room to spare for your share of the group equipment that will be divided during your course.

Weight: 3.0 - 6.5lbs / 1.6 – 2.9 kg

Stove: Liquid fuel or canister stoves are acceptable. We'll likely pair up on stoves to save weight. If you don't already own a stove please contact the AAI office to find out if you'll need to buy or rent a stove.

Fuel: White gas or gas canister. Fuel is available at the rendezvous for your course.

Fuel Bottle: For use with liquid fuel stoves. Leak-proof bottles designed for your specific stove such as Sigg or MSR are best.

Pots: One 1½ - 2 quart pot is enough for one person. Two people sharing a stove might want to bring two pots if their meals are significantly different.

Materials: Titanium, aluminum

Eating Utensils:

- Spoon: Bigger is better. Lexan is lighter, but metal spoons are more durable.
- Thermal mug: 16-20oz with a lid.
- Bowl: A lightweight Tupperware-type bowl is recommended.

Lighter: Bring two. Please be advised, lighters are no longer acceptable in checked baggage when flying.

Hydration: 3 liters of water capacity minimum. One solid 32oz water bottle, such as a one-quart Nalgene, is required. Hydration bladders with appropriate accessories are recommended.

Water Purification: Bring tablets or liquid purification. Filters are heavy and should not be used.

Other Essentials

Food: You are responsible for planning your meals for the duration of this program. In both Part I and II, we will car camp for three to six days depending on weather and conditions. Planning for the Part II, Part III or Part IV course is somewhat complicated as the itinerary can change depending on conditions. Please have the first six days of food ready to be carried into the mountains. Food and clothing that is not needed in one area can be left in the course van. To aid in this process we have included meal planning guidelines and/or a day-to-day menu planner as part of your registration packet. Please feel free to call our administrative office for additional guidance in the food planning and packing process.

Passport: Required. At times, the course may travel to British Columbia during Parts II, III or IV. A

driver's license is not acceptable. If there is any reason that you cannot travel to Canada, please contact a program coordinator BEFORE the start of your program.

Personal Medical Kit: For sunburn, blisters, cuts, scrapes, etc. Please include duct tape, moleskin, band aids, blister care supplies, and prescriptions at a minimum.

Personal Toiletries: Bring a toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hand sanitizer, etc. Bring one roll of toilet paper. Showers will be available at times during the course.

Sunscreen: With a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 30. For the fair skinned, the higher the SPF the better. Stick applicators allow you to apply without exposing fingers. Dermatone produces an effective 1" diameter stick, as well as a translucent zinc oxide lotion. A couple of 1 oz. tubes are adequate. Only your face and, at times, your hands, will be exposed. Several small containers are better than one large one.

Lip Protection: Bring 2 containers/applicators with the highest SPF available. Zinc oxide also works well (available in pharmacies) as do some models of "chapstick" that have SPF15 or higher.

Glacier Glasses: Choose a model with 100% UVA/UVB protection and side shields. If you have an extra pair, bring them too. *Note:* Those using contact lenses should also bring a pair of prescription glasses in the event that your contacts or solutions are lost or damaged by freezing.

Garbage Bags: Bring two or three large ones. They serve a variety of uses. Trash compactor bags, if available, are more durable.

Headlamp: High output LED models are preferred over older halogen models. Bring one set of extra batteries. Flashlights are not acceptable.

Repair Kit: Stove repair kit, Thermarest repair kit (for Thermarest pad users), crampon wrench and extra screws, 10 to 20 feet of lightweight nylon cord, small sewing kit, duct tape (can be wrapped on water bottles or trekking poles), pack waist buckle.

Multitool: Any multitool similar to a Leatherman is great. One can be shared amongst tent-mates.

Compass: Liquid filled. Appropriate for basic map and compass navigation. Models with adjustable declination are desirable as they make taking bearings easier. Maps can be purchased from AAI.

Optional Equipment

The items listed below are not required, although many are nice "luxury" items that can make your course more enjoyable. Remember that a few ounces here and there add up to extra pounds on your back and knees during your course.

Handiwipes: AKA the mountain shower. For personal hygiene and general use.

Pee Bottle: 1-quart size minimum. A collapsible 2L Nalgene is recommended. Plastic bottles from the store such as Gatorade bottles can work well but the lids are less secure than a Nalgene. If you choose to bring one of these, use it carefully and make sure the capacity is adequate. Label your pee bottle well. Women should also bring a pee funnel; Freshette makes a tried and true model.

Bandana: These have many uses on the mountain.

Materials: cotton

Entertainment: Books, games, cards, for evenings in the tent. Music players like mini-disc and MP3 players are popular because the device and media are small and relatively lightweight.

Ear Plugs: Defense against snoring and high winds in the area.

Insect Repellent: Recommended. If bringing repellent, look for more concentrated repellent in smaller containers. Pack it in a Ziploc bag to prevent contaminating other items in your pack.

Camera: We recommend small point and shoot cameras that can easily be carried in an outside pocket or small case outside your pack. If you can't comfortably and safely carry your camera outside your pack, even in bad weather, you'll miss the best photo opportunities. Though some climbers bring them, SLR cameras are not recommended because of weight and bulk.

Note: If bringing a digital camera, consider your battery needs. If your camera uses a proprietary lithium ion type you may want to bring an extra. If your camera uses AA or AAA batteries, use lithium batteries and bring one or two sets of extra batteries, more if you take a lot of photos.

Water Bottle Parkas: These insulating jackets are for your water bottles to help prevent freezing. Bring one for each bottle. These are useful for early and late season courses.

Buff/Balaclava: "Buffs" are a multifunctional neck gaiter that can substitute for a lightweight balaclava.
Materials: synthetic

Nose Protection: Designed to protect your nose from the sun, this is a cloth nose guard that fits onto your glacier glasses. Try the fit on your sunglasses; they should fit well without pushing the frames off your nose.

Foot Powder: A very small bottle will allow you to treat your feet daily, keep them dryer, extend the life of your socks, and help you avoid blisters/rashes from chronic wet feet.

Weight: 1 - 2oz / 28 – 56 grams

Examples: Gold Bond, Dr. Scholls

Small, comfortable climbing pack: Highly recommended. This will be very useful for the rock sections of your course, any lightweight technical ascents done.

Weight: 16 - 36oz / 453 – 1000 grams

Size Range: 28 – 35 liters / 1700 - 2100 cu in.

Post-Climbing Clothing: A clean set of cotton clothing is an excellent item to leave in the vehicle for use upon your return.

Avalanche and Ski Courses

Avalanche courses take place in the winter with a deep snowpack. As such you will need cold weather clothing. These programs are "day" programs. So you will not be required to camp out, but will return to town each night.

Following is a breakdown of equipment that you will need for the Avalanche Level I and Avalanche Pro Level I courses:

Backcountry Travel Equipment

Note: We allow skis, splitboards, or snowshoes for this course. Any of these types of snow locomotion are acceptable, though snowshoes are less desirable because they are not as efficient.

Snowshoes: They should be equipped with an integral crampon (most snowshoes already have an integral crampon). MSR snowshoes are proven and quite durable.

Snowshoe Boots: Make sure they are warm, waterproof, and comfortable to walk in!

Ski Boots: We strongly encourage the use of randonee (alpine touring) equipment. If you are an experienced telemark skier, modern telemark gear will also be accepted. Make sure your boots fit you snug enough for downhill performance, but are comfortable enough to keep your toes warm. The hinge should be flexible enough to allow for comfortable walking, even for long distances. They must be equipped with a deep rubber lugged sole.

Snowboard Boots: To be paired with snowshoes for the ascents or use in your splitboard.

Skis/Splitboard: Skis with a backcountry flex (softer) are preferable to skis designed for hard packed lift serviced skiing. You may choose to bring either telemark skis or alpine touring skis. Telemark skis must be equipped with full metal edges. If you use a cable binding, bring a spare cable. Equip your skis with runaway straps. Alpine touring skis should use bindings that allow for forward and lateral release.

Ski Skins: Black Diamond skins work well. Make sure the glue is tacky and that the skins are the correct width and length for the skis you will be using.

Ski Poles: Adjustable trekking poles with a full-size basket are recommended. Ski/Probe poles are not a substitute for the avalanche probe.

Ski Pack: Your pack should fit well, move with you, and not be a major hindrance when downhill skiing. Choose a model with ice axe loops and straps to carry your skis easily. Some models feature additional avalanche features such as an "Avalung" or airbags.

Size Range: 40 - 45 liters / 2500 – 3000 cu in

Ski Runaway Straps: Required for keeping your skis attached to you so that your skiing doesn't turn into a walking trip.

Avalanche Transceiver: Your beacon MUST be a modern, single frequency (457kHz) beacon. Three antenna digital beacons are preferred. If your beacon is older than 5 years, you should consider retiring it or returning it to the manufacturer to have it tested for function and frequency drift.

Shovel: We require metal (aluminum) shovels. Newer models are lighter, stronger, more packable, and more ergonomic than older ones.

Avalanche Probe: 230cm minimum. Required even if bringing 'probe poles'. Carbon fiber is lighter and suffers less deflection than aluminum models. Look for a model that has graduated depth markings for use during snow pit studies.

Snow Saw: Lightweight aluminum saws work well. A big handle is a useful feature.

Compass: Liquid filled. Bring a model that has a clinometer.

Snow Thermometer: Digital or analog, these must be graduated in degrees Celsius. A hard-sided case is important for protection.

Magnifier (loupe): 8X or 10X recommended.

Crystal Card/Identification Screen: Ideally, these are dark metal to ease identification of crystal shape and size.

Folding Ruler: Bring a 2-meter model that is graduated in centimeters.

Course Textbooks:

Snow Weather and Avalanche Observation Guidelines (SWAG) - This is available online from the American Avalanche Association (AAA). **This is required for the Level 2 course.**

The Avalanche Handbook, Mountaineers Press

AIARE Field book

Mechanical Pencil: Bring two. Mechanical with lead and eraser work well and don't need sharpening!

Note: Pre-packaged snow observation kits sold in backcountry ski shops often have thermometers in Fahrenheit, rulers in inches, white crystal cards that are difficult to see multiple grains or to identify grain size and type. Please take the extra effort to purchase the recommended equipment.

AMGA Single Pitch Instructor Course

Depending on where you take your SPI course, the preceding equipment list may or may not apply to you. You will receive an area specific equipment list before you start your course.

The SPI course is a professional level course. Following is a short list:

60 Meter Dynamic Climbing Rope: This should be a rope in good repair that you would be willing to instruct with.

Static Rope: You will need 100-feet of static rope (8-11mm) for building institutional anchors.

Rock Rack: You will need a personal rock rack with assorted cams, carabiners, slings, etc. The more that you have, the easier it will be to build anchors.

2 Cordelletes: 18-21 feet of 6mm climbing cord.

Assisted Breaking Device: The Petzl GriGri and the Trango Cinch are the most popular devices on the market.

Belay Device: Please bring an autoblocking device. Examples of these include the Reverso, the Guide XP, and the B52.

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