

# OUTDOORS

Super  
Dave  
facts

To get into the holiday spirit, check out Checo Tohomaso & VOC Soul Gospel Choir at Grouse Mountain this Sunday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. . Details at [www.grousemountain.com](http://www.grousemountain.com)  
Dave's hot sites this week are:  
[www.avalanche.ca](http://www.avalanche.ca), [www.adventuresmart.ca](http://www.adventuresmart.ca)  
[www.peakalpine.com](http://www.peakalpine.com)

## Mountains hide avalanche risk

### Equipment and training are keys to responding

By DAVE NORONA  
for Metro Vancouver

OVER THE PAST FEW weeks, Mother Nature has dumped an amazing amount of snow on our mountains. All ski/snowboard resorts, snowshoe parks and backcountry areas are reporting record snowfall for this time of year. It is time to get out and play.

Most winter enthusiasts recreate inbounds at areas that are patrolled by Avalanche Professionals and Ski Patrol to manage the snow pack. However, an increasing population is heading off-piste to get

away from the crowds and explore amazing terrain with lots of fresh, untouched powder.

It is great that so many people are discovering these areas; however, whether you ski, snowboard, snowshoe or snowmobile, being off in the backcountry comes with a huge responsibility. If you are going to explore these areas you need to have the right equipment and training to respond to an emergency if something goes wrong.

Avalanches can happen anywhere and at any time, so if you are in the mountains you have to be prepared. At least two members of your party should have their Avalanche Skills Training Course (AST). Everyone in your group should be carrying the 10

Essentials ([www.adventuresmart.ca](http://www.adventuresmart.ca)) and a probe, shovel and avalanche transceiver and know how to use it.

If you are interested in taking an AST course, then check out the Canadian Avalanche Centre at [www.avalanche.ca](http://www.avalanche.ca) and find out when a course will be in your area. You don't need to wait for a course to come to you; instead, you can get together with your regular backcountry group and hire a mountain guide to give the AST course in the environment you regularly go to. This way you will learn the important factors and things to look for in an area that is familiar to you. While you wait to take your course, you can check out the Canadian Avalanche Centre's free online course. This course does not replace the AST



Rescue workers respond to an avalanche. They can happen anytime, anywhere, so be prepared.

program but will provide you with some basic avalanche first response skills in the meantime.

The AST course includes learning about snow stability, avalanche terrain and how to travel safely in the backcountry. You will also

learn how to efficiently use an avalanche beacon, probe and shovel and how to co-ordinate a search if someone gets caught in an avalanche. You will be amazed at how much you will learn over the two-day course and how much bet-

ter prepared you will be to make calculated decisions.

Remember if you get into trouble, those in your party are the first responders who will be there to save you.

So, who would you like that to be?

### GEAR *guide*

#### BOOK 30 AVALUATOR

**Description:** The Avaluator Accident Prevention Card and Booklet was designed to help you make better decisions in all stages of your trip. It has some great information on trip planning, avalanche hazards, slope evaluation and good travel habits.  
**Price range:** \$12  
**Where to find it:**  
[www.avalanche.ca](http://www.avalanche.ca)

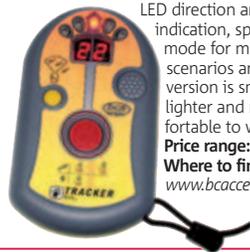


#### BLACK DIAMOND COVERT 32 DAYPACK

**Description:** This small but technical pack is designed to carry all your backcountry equipment, food and extra gear with ease. It's lightweight and the side compression straps work as ski holsters when hiking.  
**Price range:** \$100  
**Where to find it:**  
[www.blackdiamond-equipment.com](http://www.blackdiamond-equipment.com)

#### BACKCOUNTRY ACCESS TRACKER DTS AVALANCHE BEACON

**Description:** The Tracker's dual antennas and digital technology make it much easier for the searcher to locate the avalanche victim. It has LED direction and distance indication, spotlight mode for multi burial scenarios and the new version is smaller, lighter and more comfortable to wear.  
**Price range:** \$320  
**Where to find it:**  
[www.bcaccess.com](http://www.bcaccess.com)



#### G3 AVI TECH SHOVEL

**Description:** G3's Avi Tech shovel is one of the best shovels on the market due to its high strength, ease of use and easy to see bright red colour. The D-grip handle features a unique ice axe loop attachment point and the telescopic handle means it packs away small.  
**Price range:** \$76  
**Where to find it:**  
[www.genuineguidegear.com](http://www.genuineguidegear.com)



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