



American
Alpine Institute

The Spirit of Alpinism

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GLACIER SKILLS AND CREVASSE RESCUE

Mt. Baker, WA

PROGRAM ITINERARY

Program Details:

The Glacier Skills and Crevasse Rescue course is a three-day hands-on class that fully takes place on the glaciers of Mt. Baker. The intent is to give students the fundamental skills to be a contributing member of a rope team and to build your toolkit in order to kick off your mountaineering career.

Difficulty Grade:

Beginner to Moderate

Program cost Inclusions and Exclusions:

Inclusions: Permits and access fees; Transportation during the course; Guide; Group technical equipment; Biffy bags.

Exclusions: Food costs; Personal equipment; Lodging costs (for the night before your course starts and the night you come back to Bellingham); Personal health, Baggage and Trip Insurance; Transportation before and after your course dates.

Itinerary:

Day 1 – Rendezvous at the AAI Equipment Shop and Head to Mt. Baker (6400ft/1951m)

Plan to meet your fellow climbers and instructor(s) at the AAI Equipment Shop promptly at 7:00am. You will have the time to go over equipment, finalize rentals and purchases, review the itinerary, and your instructors will ensure everyone is adequately prepared.

Once everyone is ready, you will make the roughly one and a half hour drive up to one of the trailheads for Mt. Baker. There is one on the north side of the mountain and one on the south side as well. The decision on where the team will go will be made by instructors as we get closer to the start of the program, once there is a more accurate forecast and conditions are known. There are multiple options for camp near the edge of the glaciers, usually at around 6000' on both sides of the mountain. Once you arrive, the team will set up camp and dive right into skills training. In most instances, teams will start with snow skills and practice boot/crampon/ice axe techniques, then transition into self arrest maneuvers. In the evening, the team may discuss one or more of the following concepts: glacier travel, glaciation, mountain weather, and geology. You may also cover knots and hitches if time allows.

Day 2 – Crevasse Rescue (7000ft/2133m)

You will get an early start today and make your way up onto the glacier, roughly an additional half mile to one mile to an appropriate location to practice glacier travel, rope work, and snow anchors. Those skills are covered first this day so that the rest of the day can be allotted to crevasse rescue. Today and the next day will be full days of hands-on practice. As long as weather and conditions allow it, we try to give all students the opportunity to practice being both a rescuer who will set up a hauling system and then also a fallen climber who will try ascending the rope to self-rescue.

Day 3 – Team Rescue, Additional Skills, Hike Out (7000ft/2133m)

On this last day, the group will again hike out on the glacier, and this time you'll look at options for assisted or team rescue. You will also discuss any of the remaining glaciology, geology, or navigation lessons that didn't get covered on the first day. Once the instruction is complete, you will hike back down to camp, pack up and hike out to the trailhead. The instructors aim to have everyone back at the AAI equipment shop between 3-7pm, depending on weather and group pace.