



PRESS RELEASE

Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team

For Immediate Release

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Avalanche Safety

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Incline Village, Nev. – With all the recent snowfall we've been experiencing and more on the way, it's a good reminder to be aware of avalanche potential and educate ourselves on proactive steps to take before going outside to recreate – whether skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling, snowshoeing or hiking.

Proactive steps that you can take before going out include:

- Check Sierra Avalanche Center's recorded avalanche advisory 530-587-3558, ext. 258.
- Visit [http://www.sierraavalanchecenter.org/\[sierraavalanchecenter.org\]](http://www.sierraavalanchecenter.org/[sierraavalanchecenter.org]) to learn more details about avalanche safety and training classes that are available. Also, most local sports shops offer free classes and training throughout the winter.
- Recognize warning signs:
 - Such as recent avalanches (if there are new avalanches, it's likely that more are possible in that area.)
 - Signs of unstable snow as you travel (cracking or collapsing snowpack, whumpfung sounds, hollow drum-like sounds on hard snow.)
 - Heavy snowfall or rain in the past 24 hours (significant snowfall or rain can make the snowpack unstable; avalanches are often triggered the first clear day after a storm; because it's sunny doesn't mean it's safe.)
 - Windblown snow (loads leeward slopes, even when it's not snowing out).

- Significant warming or rapidly increasing temperatures (warm temps and gravity can cause the snow to creep downhill and become less stable.)
- Persistent weak layers (can be triggered weeks after a storm, they can be difficult to identify so check the Avalanche Advisory for your area.)
- Identify avalanche terrain:
 - Slope angle (avalanches are possible on any slope steeper than 30 degrees, and occur most frequently on slopes 35 – 50 degrees.)
 - Terrain traps (anything that increases the consequences of being caught in a slide such as cliffs, trees and rocks.)
 - Common trigger points (under certain conditions avalanches may be triggered from flatter areas in the runout zone or along ridge crests.)
 - Aspect (which way does the slope face in relation to sun, wind?)
- Safe travel protocol:
 - Back country travelers should carry proper gear such as a transceiver, probe, and shovel.
 - Always carry your gear on your body with your transceiver turned on.
 - Consider riding with an inflatable pack to increase your chances of staying on top of an avalanche.
 - Practice with your gear regularly. Seconds count and your gear only works when you can use it confidently and efficiently in bad conditions.
 - Carry the gear and supplies you need to survive an injury or a long evacuation in winter conditions.
 - Be able to communicate with your partners and rescuers.
 - Remember that your gear helps you have a safer and more fun day - it does not guarantee your safety.
 - Never expose more than one person to avalanche danger at a time (one on a slope at a time).
 - Stay alert to changing snow stability due to changes in aspect, elevation, or weather factors (heavy precipitation, wind or warming).
 - Communicate within your group, have options.

- Be prepared to do a rescue.

For more information on avalanche safety, visit

<http://www.sierraavalanchecenter.org/>[\[sierraavalanchecenter.org\]](#).

Remember, the best tip is to “Know Before You Go”, the avalanche danger rating is only a starting point. You control your own risk by choosing where, when and how you travel.

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About the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team

The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT) consists of representatives of Tahoe Basin fire agencies, CAL FIRE, Nevada Division of Forestry and related state agencies, University of California and Nevada Cooperative Extensions, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, the U.S. Forest Service, conservation districts from both states, the California Tahoe Conservancy and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. Our Mission is to protect lives, property and the environment within the Lake Tahoe Basin from wildfire by implementing prioritized fuels reduction projects and engaging the public in becoming a Fire Adapted Community.

For more information, visit www.tahoafft.org[\[tahoafft.org\]](#).