

AIARE Level 1 &/or Avalanche Rescue Course Equipment List

The list below reflects all of the items you will need for the field portion of the NMS AIARE Level 1 or the Avalanche Rescue course. Be sure you have all of the required gear listed below for the field days.

Items included in this list are required. However, the specific products listed as examples are not. The examples listed below are the products we use ourselves. Comparable products from other manufacturers are sufficient as well. If you have any questions, feel free to contact our office.

Items marked with a **(R)** are available to rent from NMS. Quantities are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis. If you would like to rent gear from NMS please return the rental form that was included in your pre-trip email. If you rent gear from NMS your guide will bring it to the start of the program for you. Items marked with an **(O)** are optional. Items marked with a **(P)** are available to purchase from NMS.

Ski Gear

-
- ❑ **Alpine Touring (A/T) or Telemark Skis:** We find a mid-fat ski 95-108 mm underfoot to be the most enjoyable vehicle for general ski touring in the Cascades. If your ski is too fat it tends to be heavier and more difficult to use in established skin tracks. i.e. Blizzard Zero G 105, Fischer Ranger 108, 102, or 96 or K2 Wayback 106 or 96.
 - ❑ **Ski Bindings:** A/T bindings come in two styles: tech and track. We recommend tech bindings for their lighter weight and increased skinning efficiency. We do require brakes on all A/T bindings and break-away leashes on all tele bindings. If you are on tele bindings, we recommend you pack a basic repair kit specific to your binding with extra cables, throws, etc. i.e. Fritschi Viper Evo 12
 - ❑ **Ski Boots:** A/T boots vary from ultralight rando race boots to four buckle alpine boots with a walk mode. We recommend an A/T boot with tech inserts, a Vibram, or equivalent rubber, sole, and a thermo-fit foam liner. Additionally, we recommend you swap out the stock insoles with Superfeet or custom insoles. i.e. Scarpa F1 or Maestrale RS or Fischer Transalp Pro
 - ❑ **Split-boards:** Like skis, split-boards come in a variety of shapes and materials depending on their intended use. For our longer tours we highly recommend a hard boot/plate binding combo. i.e. Voile Spartan
 - ❑ **Split-board Bindings:** There are several options ranging from heavier, retrofitted pucks and sub-plates to fully integrated, lightweight, machined bindings. We recommend the latter. i.e. Phantom Splitboard Binding w/ a tech toe for tour mode.
 - ❑ **Split-board Boots:** Generally, any snowboard boot will work for winter touring in the Cascades. However if you are thinking of investing in a new setup with an eye to longer tours or more technical objectives it is strongly preferable to have a hard boot that allows for effective cramponing when necessary. These boots should be tech compatible to pair with a plate style binding. i.e. Scarpa F1 or La Sportiva Spitfire.
 - ❑ **Skins:** Most skins are made of nylon, but you can find mohair and nylon/mohair blends as well. We recommend nylon skins because of their performance and durability. Skins should cover the entire base leaving just the metal edges exposed for grip when traversing on hard snow. Skins should have tip and tail clips. i.e. Black Diamond Ascension Nylon Climbing Skins
 - ❑ **Ski Poles (R):** Companies make two and three piece adjustable poles out of aluminum and carbon. Most skiers prefer different pole lengths for skinning and skiing. Adjustable poles are also easier to pack and travel with. We recommend a two piece pole for skiing and a three piece pole for splitboarding. i.e. Black Diamond Traverse or Expedition
 - ❑ **Ski Pack:** 35 Liters with the ability to attach skis easily, ideally with a designated separate shovel/probe compartment. An airbag is not required for this course but several of the guides do use these. We are happy to discuss the pros/cons of these packs with you if you have any questions. i.e. BD Cirque 35, Dawn Patrol 32 or Jet Force Pro 35 Avalanche Airbag Pack.



- Avalanche Beacon (457 MHz) (R):** Start with new batteries and always carry a spare set. These should be Duracell Alkaline batteries. DO NOT bring Lithium Ion, off brand or rechargeable batteries for your beacon. i.e. Pieps Powder BT Avalanche Beacon
- Shovel (R):** This needs to be a shovel specifically designed for avalanche rescue. Avy shovels are collapsible, with handle that expand to be long enough to dig effectively, usually two or three parts, and made of metal. i.e. Black Diamond Transfer shovel
- Avalanche Probe (R):** This should be a sturdy probe and longer for traveling in deeper snowpacks. i.e. Black Diamond QuickDraw Carbon Probe 300
- Snow Shoes (R):** You can do this course on snow shoes instead of touring gear if that is your preference. If you have touring gear there is no need for snow shoes.
- Helmet (O):** We do encourage touring with helmets and taking safety measures to prevent head injuries.

Upper Body Clothing

- Synthetic or Wool Long Underwear Top:** This should be lightweight, long-sleeved, and lighter colored. i.e. Patagonia Capilene Lightweight Top
- Insulating Layers:** This should be warm, breathable, and packable. i.e. Patagonia Nano Air Hoody or R1 Full-Zip Hoody.
- Soft Shell Jacket:** Soft shell jackets are much more breathable than any hard shell and are therefore more comfortable to climb uphill in. Look for relatively lightweight (~16 oz) jacket that you can layer under for warmth when it is cold out but you can also use for wind protection when it is relatively warm. i.e. Patagonia R1 TechFace Hoody.
- Hard Shell Jacket:** We will always bring a hardshell jacket in case of bad weather. This tends to be something that sits in your pack unused if the weather is decent, but it is critical when the weather turns bad. As such the two main criteria to consider for this layer are weight (ideally ~ 12 oz) & waterproofness (i.e. Gore tex fabric is key). i.e. Patagonia Ascensionist or Calcite Jacket
- Insulating Parka with hood:** This can be down or synthetic, needs a hood, and should fit over all of your other layers. i.e. Patagonia Down Sweater Hoody, DAS Parka or DAS Light Hoody

Lower Body Clothing

- Synthetic Underwear:** i.e. Patagonia Capilene Lightweight Performance line of underwear
- Synthetic Long Underwear bottoms:** i.e. Patagonia Capilene Midweight Bottoms.
- Hard Shell Pants:** We recommend somewhat lighter, hard shell pant with side zips for venting. i.e. Patagonia Pow Slayer Pants.

Head, Hands, and Feet

- Warm Hat or Balaclava:** It is important this is a wool or synthetic blend and not made of cotton. i.e. Patagonia Beanie Hat
- Neck Gaiter or Buff:** This can be good for protecting your face in a cold wind. The Buff is a lightweight neck gaiter that has innumerable uses including doubling as an ear band.
- Sun Hat:** i.e. Patagonia Surf Brim sun hat
- Sun Glasses:** We recommend a dark lens and side shields for the best eye protection. i.e. Julbo Shield M or Monte Rosa 2 with the Spectron 4 lens. Keep in mind, most manufacturers' "dark" lenses transfer roughly 10% of available light.
- Ski Goggles:** We recommend choosing a versatile lens that will not burn your eyes in high light nor become a safety hazard in low light. i.e. Julbo Pulse
- Mid weight glove:** i.e. Black Diamond Arc Tour Glove
- Ski Gloves (1-2 pairs):** It is not a bad idea to bring a 2nd warm pair of ski gloves for your avalanche course as more time will be spent digging in the snow in often inclement weather and it is easy to get cold hands on these course field days. i.e. Black Diamond Legend Glove.
- Chemical Hand warmers (O):** These are optional, but recommended for people whose hands get cold easily.
- Socks :** These should be a wool or synthetic blend; no cotton. i.e. Patagonia Merino Performance Socks



Other Items

- Headlamp (O):** It is never a bad idea to have a lightweight headlamp in your pack. i.e. Petzl Zipka
- Hydration:** A good combo here is a 1-liter bottle and a 16 oz thermos. Hydration systems with hoses are not advisable as they tend to freeze in the winter.
- Lunch food:** We usually shoot for ~1,600 calories/day
- Sunscreen:** 1 oz tube with high SPF factor (30 or higher)
- Lip Balm w/ sunscreen:** SPF 15 or higher
- Repair Kit:** Bring a small kit specific to your bindings.
- Batteries:** Always carry a spare set for your beacon (+ headlamp, camera etc)
- Small Camera (O)**
- Blister kit:** This should be very small i.e. duct tape, Compeed pads (these are AMAZING for blister prevention/relief and worth their weight in gold, far superior to moleskin), & band-aids.
- Notepad, pencil, and coffee mug:** for classroom session

Gear Shops

Arlberg Sports Haus (Leavenworth): A great local resource for tech compatible rental A/T boots and skis. <http://www.arlbergsports.com/pages/leavenworth> or (509) 548-5615

Cripple Creek Backcountry Seattle: A great ski touring gear shop in Seattle w/ a solid fleet of rental touring skis and split-boards. cripplecreekbc.com or 206-420-3775

Ascent Outdoors: A great gear shop in Seattle. Ascent Outdoors sells new and used gear. ascentoutdoors.com 206-545-8810

Feathered Friends: Also a great source for all of your gear needs. Feathered Friends does not rent touring gear. www.featheredfriends.com Seattle, WA

