



# AVALANCHE SAFETY

Alpine sports offer unique experiences but you should be aware of the potential for snow avalanches.



Every member of a backcountry party should carry a shovel and probe and wear a rescue transceiver.

Most skiers and snow boarders start the avalanche that catches them.

Most avalanches occur during and immediately after storms.

New Zealand's mountains and valleys are easily accessible but the weather can be extreme and at times the avalanche danger high.

Be aware that small avalanches can kill.

LEARN THE SKILLS  
GET THE EQUIPMENT  
MAKE SAFE JUDGEMENTS AND STAY ALIVE  
KEEP OFF SLOPES UNTIL YOU CAN ESTABLISH WHY THEY ARE SAFE

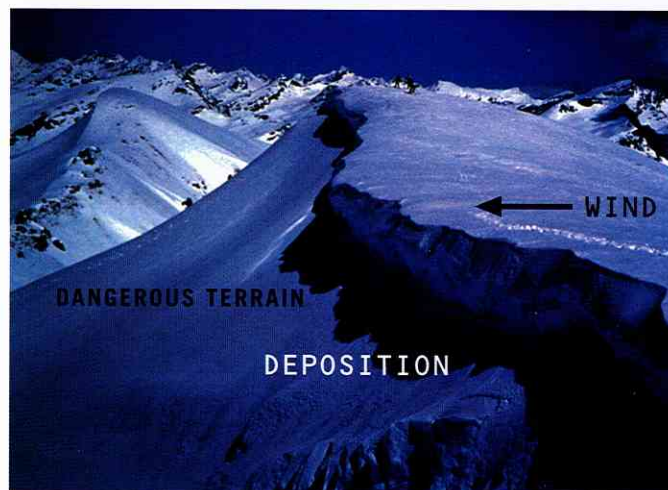
## THE KEY IS TO PICK A SAFE ROUTE

THE BEST SKIING AND BOARDING TERRAIN IS OFTEN AVALANCHE PRONE, AS ARE THE STEEP CHUTES USED BY CLIMBERS AND TRAMPERS. AVALANCHES ARE COMMON ON SLOPES STEEPER THAN 20 DEGREES.

Avalanche awareness courses teach you to recognise and avoid avalanche terrain.



Cornice growth indicates that the wind has transported snow to the slope below (left of photo). The ridge and windward slopes are likely to be safe while the lee slopes may be dangerously loaded.



AN AWARENESS COURSE WILL INTRODUCE YOU TO SKILLS NEEDED FOR SNOW STABILITY ASSESSMENT

## SNOW STABILITY AND AVALANCHES

SLAB AND LOOSE SNOW AVALANCHES OCCUR UNDER VERY DIFFERENT SNOW CONDITIONS BUT THE CONSEQUENCES CAN BE EQUALLY GRAVE.

Dangerous conditions exist within the snowpack when a strong (slab) layer overlies a weak layer.

Snowball formation on a sunny slope indicates instability at the surface. Loose snow avalanches may follow.

Small loose snow avalanches have triggered much larger slab releases.

Dig a snow profile and look for the weakest layer. (Another reason to carry that shovel)



Slab avalanches start at a fracture line



Loose snow avalanches start from a point

TAKE AN ADVANCED COURSE TO LEARN HOW TO DETERMINE IF A SLOPE IS SAFE