Probing Strategies
20151017-AVA-REC0011 Avalanche Rescue Commission Recommendation

To minimize search times, maximize survival chances and reduce risk to rescuers, it is recommended to apply the following procedure:

1) With limited resources, in cases with obvious terrain traps and around anchored surface clues, spot probe the most likely burial areas.

2) Coarse probe the likely burial areas:
   a. On first passage limit the probing depth to 1.5m.
   b. On second passage, probe with lateral offset and maximum probing depth.

3) Fine probe the entire avalanche debris including the immediately adjacent areas to maximum probing depth.

4) Remove the fine-probed debris to within 1m of the probed depth. Repeat steps 2, 3 and 4.

Accurate marking allows a systematic continuation of probing in subsequent passages (according to AVA-REC0003).

Risk to rescuers and resource availability may influence the rescue procedure.

**Slalom Probing**

Slalom probing has been demonstrated to be an efficient coarse probing method.

1) Space rescuers 1.5m apart (outstretched arms, wrist to wrist) to create a 50 x 50 cm grid (88% probability of detection).

2) Ensure correct forward spacing by placing the probe forward 50cm before the forward step.
3) The leader is probing in the center and gives commands: "probe" - "right" - "right" - "forward" - "left" - "left"… and "align left to right", if required.

4) Probe at 90° to the slope surface in front of the rescuer.

If resources allow, split rescuers into multiple probe lines of 6 to 10. Higher levels of rescuer training allow for longer probe lines.

In certain circumstances e.g. very rough/soft debris, forest, or untrained volunteers, other coarse probing methods may be more suitable.

A detailed description of the method is available in: SLALOM PROBING - A SURVIVAL CHANCE OPTIMIZED PROBE LINE SEARCH STRATEGY; 2014; Genswein M, Letang D, Jarry F, Reiweiger I, Atkns D; Proceedings of ISSW 2014
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