



International Commission for Alpine Rescue

Phases in an Avalanche Search

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Avalanche Search Procedure

An avalanche search consists of 4 distinct phases, which must be performed in sequence. The means of search may be different for the individual phases.

1. Signal and Clue Search

The Signal and clue search phase involves locating the initial signal. Signal refers to Transceiver, RECCO, Sound, Dog indication, other technologies or Visual clue.

Key Points:

- Scan for visual clues on the surface of the avalanche debris while conducting the signal search methodically and fast.
- If it's possible, use Last Seen Point (LSP) as a reference for the search.
- Utilize search strip widths appropriate to the technique.

2. Coarse Search

The Coarse Search begins once you have detected a signal(s) and begin to narrow down the location of the buried person(s).

Key Points:

- Inform team members you have a signal and move quickly in the direction indicated.

3. Fine Search

The Fine Search phase occurs when you determine an approximate location of the buried subject.

Key Points:

- Focus on accuracy.
- Use a systematic pattern to identify the closest point to the buried subject.

- Indicate the location with a visual marker.

4. Pinpoint Probing

After completing the Fine Search phase, transition into the Pinpoint Probing phase.

Pinpoint Probing:

- Pinpoint probing is used to confirm the buried person's exact location with a probe, allowing shovelers to focus their efforts.
- Insert the probe at a 90-degree angle to the snow surface at the visual mark.
- Continue probing in a 25x25 cm expanding grid from the center point.
- Once a probe strike is achieved, inform team members. Leave the probe in place to identify the location of the subject to extricate.