



March 5, 2008

Special Public Avalanche Warning for BC's Columbia Mountains

The Canadian Avalanche Centre (CAC) is issuing a Special Public Avalanche Warning for the Columbia Mountains of BC. This includes the Cariboo Mountains near Prince George down to the southern Selkirk and Monashee Mountains near Nakusp. This warning is in effect for the period of Thursday, March 6 through Sunday, March 9.

At issue is a weak layer, currently buried 20-60 cm deep in the snowpack. "This layer has already been responsible for a number of close-call incidents," says John Kelly, CAC Operations Manager. "Generally speaking, these near-misses have surprised the people involved. The avalanches are running where they aren't expected, such as slopes that have been ridden previously or on relatively low-angle terrain."

The CAC warns that managing this risk requires a comprehensive knowledge of the snowpack. Backcountry users who do not have a good familiarity with the history of the snow in their area should exercise extreme caution. The CAC will be updating the avalanche forecasts for the targeted regions throughout this warning period. Please check the bulletins at www.avalanche.ca for information and advice on the avalanche risk in your area.

As always, reducing risk begins with education. We encourage all recreational backcountry users to start with an Avalanche Skills Training course. The CAC's website has a directory of course providers, listed by region. Every person in the group needs appropriate rescue gear, and using the Avaluator, the CAC's new avalanche decision-making tool, will also help reduce risk. Public avalanche forecasts and information reports can be obtained at avalanche.ca or by phoning 1-800-667-1105.

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For more information

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