



## **RE: CAA Avalanche Operations Level 2: Module 2 & ACMG Assistant Ski Guides**

Dear Level 2 Students,

The CAA has received numerous inquiries regarding rumors of an equivalency option for certified ACMG Assistant Ski Guides and exemption from the Module 2 course of the Avalanche Operations Level 2 program. This letter is intended to clarify the situation and layout the decisions that have recently been made by the CAA, ACMG and Thompson Rivers University.

### **Development of the Avalanche Operations Level 2 Program**

At the request of many employers and CAA members the Level 2 program underwent a significant multi-year rewrite that started in late 1999 ended in March 2002. This project was a collaborative multi-stakeholder initiative that involved numerous individuals and organizations from a broad-spectrum of the Canadian avalanche community. Experts and specialists from several outside agencies were brought in to consult on various topics such as adult education, snow avalanche research, risk communication, hazardous attitudes, safety management systems and decision-making. Through each step of the process employers and key figures in the Canadian avalanche community were consulted to ensure that the project was on course and that content was relevant to the current and emerging needs of this diverse community.

The new modular Level 2 was phased in over 2 years, starting in the fall of 2001. Since that time numerous revisions have taken place to update and streamline the content to ensure that the program remains relevant to the needs of employers. The summer of 2006 will see another significant curriculum project occur on the Level 2 program involving all 3 modules. The CAA's commitment to high standards of education and training for avalanche workers in Canada remains strong. This is a core purpose of the CAA and is reflected in our vision and mission.

### **Partnerships in Training**

Over the last 25 years the CAA has had several experiences in partnerships with 3<sup>rd</sup> party educational and training institutions in the delivery of our programs. Some worked well, others did not, and none remain in place any longer. We've learned a lot from these experiences and now have a well-defined process for considering requests received regarding our association and its training programs. This process involves taking requests to the CAA's Education Committee for review, they in turn make recommendations to the CAA Executive Director, who in turn consults with other parties as necessary to make the final decision, this may involve the CAA Board of Directors depending on the request. This process takes time and often requires several steps to think through all of the possible effects of policy change and program implementation.

### **Module 2 & ACMG Assistant Ski Guides**

The request to examine an exemption or equivalency process for ACMG Assistant Ski Guides (ASG) was first brought up at the CAA's Annual General Meeting in the spring of 2002. At that time CAA instructors and managers clearly thought that the Module 2 was relevant and important training for ASGs and, while the door remained open to ensure flexibility in the future as the programs evolved, a clear decision was made to require ASGs to take the Module 2 in order to obtain their Level 2 training.

As experience with the Module 2 program increased it became evident that this request needed to be considered again. While no formal request was ever received by the ACMG or TRU the CAA took it upon itself to analyze the situation, consult with user groups and engage the CAA's collective wisdom of its committees and instructors to see if our processes and policies remained relevant or if they required modification. This process primarily involved the following parties and was initiated in early January 2006;

- CAA Education Committee (4/7 members are ACMG guides)
- Dwayne Congdon, Thompson Rivers University
- CAA Instructor Team (75% ACMG guides)
- Clair Israelson, CAA Executive Director
- Ian Tomm, CAA Operations Manager

After careful deliberation the CAA, ACMG and Thompson Rivers University are pleased to announce that a decision has been made regarding this issue. The organizations have entered into a formal agreement to work together towards the training of guides in Canada. The specifics of the policy and subsequent agreement are as follows;

*The three organizations will endeavor to work cooperatively to integrate and deliver avalanche related training for guides. Specifically the organizations will work together to enable an exemption process for certified Assistant Ski Guides to get exemption for the CAA's Module 2 course of the Avalanche Operations Level 2 program. This will be accomplished in the following general manner:*

*Thompson Rivers University and the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides agree to:*

- Work collaboratively with the CAA to develop a curriculum format, which clearly indicates the course goals, learning objectives and outcomes for all phases of the Assistant Ski Guide training program so that comparison to CAA Level 2 curriculum can be easier. This may lead to an equivalency status for the CAA Level 2 Module 2 being granted to the ASG program in the future and will help both organizations work together into the future.*
- All Assistant Ski Guide training and examination team members will have taken the Level 2 Module 1 course.*
- Work collaboratively with the CAA to help enhance the Level 2 Module 2 course.*

*The Canadian Avalanche Association agrees to:*

- Offer exemption status for the Level 2 Module 2 to certified Assistant Ski Guides who completed their CAA Level 1 Module 1 before their ASG training and certification courses. This will ensure that students integrate the Module 1 content with the skills and knowledge they acquire throughout the Assistant Ski Guide training program. It also ensures this process adheres to sound educational principles and best practices.*
- Work collaboratively with the ACMG and TRU on each of the above-mentioned criteria.*

#### **06-07 Avalanche Operations Level 2 Programs**

The policy clearly indicates exemptions will only be granted for those students who took their Module 1 before their ASG training and certification and only certified ASGs will be considered for this process. Implementation of this policy will likely take some time as each program adjusts to the necessary logistical and operational considerations of this decision. The ACMG will be providing a list of ASG candidates for the coming winter to the CAA and we will use this list to accommodate, to the best of our abilities, those candidates who wish to take their Module 1 before their ASG program. This policy does not preempt the prerequisites for admittance into the Level 2 program nor does it change how applications to the Level 2 program are processed.

Sincerely,



Ian Tomm  
CAA Operations Manager