

WAC 296-52-800 Avalanche control. (1) General.

(a) During periods of high avalanche danger, areas in avalanche paths must not be opened for use until trained personnel have evaluated conditions and determined whether avalanche control work is necessary.

(b) When avalanche control work is deemed necessary, areas in the potential avalanche path must be closed until the risk of avalanches has been reduced to a level determined appropriate by trained personnel.

(c) An avalanche must not be purposely released until the avalanche path and potential runout zone are clear of personnel and vehicles.

(d) Avalanche guards, signs, and/or barricades must be positioned at normal entrances to the avalanche path if there is any chance that personnel and vehicles will enter the danger zone during intentional release activities.

(e) During very unstable snow conditions, release of one avalanche may trigger sympathetic releases over a wide area. Avalanche workers must consider such possibility and clear the appropriate areas of personnel and vehicles.

(2) Personnel and equipment.

(a) The avalanche control crew must be adequately trained and physically capable for tasks which can be anticipated in their individual job assignments.

(b) No person must accept or be given a job assignment which is beyond the individual's physical ability or training.

(c) On-slope assignments which include potential exposure to avalanche hazards must only be conducted by fully qualified and fully equipped control crew members.

(d) The control crew may be split up into smaller groups (teams) to work on multiple areas simultaneously provided that each team consists of at least two qualified members.

(e) Each avalanche control crew or team must have one or more designated rescue coordinators as is deemed necessary to maintain communications. Compliance with this requirement may be achieved by designating control crew teams to serve as each others' rescue coordinator provided that the teams are reasonably proximate to each other and do in fact maintain frequent communications.

(f) Each avalanche control crew member must be equipped for continuous two-way communications to the avalanche crew coordinators.

(g) The avalanche crew or teams must not be assigned to on-slope areas where they cannot maintain communications with their designated coordinator. This requirement may be met by the use of a relay person; however, if any team completely loses communications, they must return directly to base via the safest route available.

(h) Each person on an avalanche control team must be equipped with a shovel and an electronic transceiver before commencing on-slope control work. The transceiver must be in the transmit position whenever personnel are performing on-slope job assignments.

(3) Avalanche rescue plan. All employers with avalanche control personnel must have a written avalanche rescue plan. The plan must require:

(a) All rescue personnel who will be assigned to on-slope activities must:

(i) Be competent skiers;

(ii) Have a current first-aid card;

(iii) Be thoroughly trained in the rescue plan details;

- (b) A specific list of required equipment for rescue crew personnel including:
- (i) Probes;
 - (ii) Belaying rope;
 - (iii) Shovels;
 - (iv) Two-way communication radios;
 - (v) Electronic transceivers;
- (c) A list of rescue equipment locations;
- (d) Specific rescue procedures to be followed.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 49.17.010, 49.17.040, 49.17.050, and 49.17.060. WSR 17-16-132, § 296-52-800, filed 8/1/17, effective 9/1/17; WSR 06-19-074, § 296-52-800, filed 9/19/06, effective 12/1/06.]