

Special Avalanche Warning for BC's Columbia Mountains and South Coast Range

Warning applies solely to public recreation in uncontrolled backcountry areas

February 17, 2010, Revelstoke, BC: The Canadian Avalanche Centre (CAC) is issuing a special public avalanche warning for the backcountry areas of the Columbia Mountains from the US border to south of Prince George, and the South Coast Mountains from Pemberton to Lillooet and north—**not** including the Whistler and Vancouver areas. The warning is in place from Thursday February 18 through to Monday February 22.

CAC Operations Manager John Kelly reports there are several weak layers in the upper snowpack, and the weight of a person or a snowmobile will trigger avalanches. “We have had several close-calls reported to our office in recent days,” says Kelly. “The clearing weather and new snow make it tempting to head into the alpine. We are warning all recreational backcountry users to be very conservative in route finding and slope selection.”

This season’s snowpack has been forgiving so far. This pattern is coming to an end as we transition to a snowpack with significant weak layers now buried in the upper portion. “The contrast may catch people by surprise” says Kelly. “What you were doing last month may no longer be a safe thing to do. You have to change your activities according to what avalanche conditions permit.”

The CAC recommends all recreational backcountry users in the warning area to stay on simple, low-angle terrain, avoid avalanche paths, and monitor the advice in the avalanche bulletins for the duration of this warning period. Everyone in a backcountry party needs to be equipped with a shovel, probe and transceiver and the CAC strongly recommends all backcountry users take an avalanche awareness course. Snowpack stability changes constantly throughout the winter; backcountry users need to check the avalanche bulletin regularly to keep informed of conditions in their area. Avalanche bulletins are available at www.avalanche.ca/bulletins or by phoning 1 800 667 1105.

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For more information

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