



Canada West Mountain School - www.themountainschool.com

Alpine Skills course planning details - 2019

This document will help you finalize your preparations for the course. Please read over all the information completely, **there are a few "action items" that we need to hear back from you on**. We also welcome and encourage any questions so that we can ensure you are best prepared for your course. Thanks!

COURSE LOCATION

On the morning of Day-1 of your course you will meet at 0900 in Squamish at the Adventure Centre. Here is a link to Google Maps - <https://goo.gl/maps/LKEUd>. The first night is non-instructional, students are responsible for their own accommodation while in Squamish. There are many campgrounds, hotels, motels and a Hostel. Participants can also choose to stay in the Vancouver area as well.

The remaining 5-days are spent in a backcountry Alpine region, with the final location determined during the first day while in Squamish. For the 2019 season, the likely option will be in the alpine backcountry behind Blackcomb Mountain in Garibaldi Provincial Park. Access is via the lifts on Whistler/Blackcomb (an additional \$62 for lift access is required). From the top of the lifts, the hike to base camp will be between 2-4 hours, depending on specific site chosen. Your campsite will be above treeline. Each of the 5 days will be spent learning and practicing skills in the surrounding alpine areas, including trips out to areas such as the Spearhead Glacier, Decker Glacier and Mt Trorey.

LOGISTICS

On Day-1 you will meet at 0900 in Squamish at the Adventure Centre. After a morning meeting with your Guide/Instructor and the other participants, you will head out to the Smoke Bluffs climbing area. This day will be spent mainly practicing and building on your rope skills and rock climbing, as well as introduction to rope rescue skills for glacier travel. The final logistics and prep for the Alpine field portion will take place during this portion as well.

On day 2 you will meet at 0900 in Whistler at the Wizard Grill at the base of Blackcomb Mountain. Here is a link to Google Maps - <https://goo.gl/maps/6fnCVNoAwmf6z2sD9>. You will perform weather and conditions check, final review of gear, confirm the route and destination before loading up on the Gondola at around 10:00.

Overnight parking is available in the municipal parking lot #4, in the Garibaldi Park/Singing Pass parking section (west side of the lot near stairs). You will need to pay for 5 separate days of parking and display all the receipts on your dash. Please allow about 15 minutes to walk from the parking lot to the Wizard Grill/Blackcomb Base area.

INSTRUCTORS

Your course will be led by one of the Canada West Mountain School Instructors/Guides who are members of the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides (ACMG). You will be notified in advance of the course who the specific instructor(s) will be for your course dates.

TRANSPORTATION

Every person is responsible for transportation to/from Squamish on Day-1; and, to/from the trailhead for the final 5 days in the alpine. We do encourage ride sharing, so if you can offer a ride to anyone, please let us know; and, if you NEED a ride, please let us know.

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GEAR

Here is a link to our gear list: <https://themountainschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/GEAR-Mountaineering-2018.pdf>. This is also attached to the pre-course package.

Your personal and camping gear should be the same that you would expect to take on a multi-day backpacking trip. You will be working each day in and on snow for the whole day, so **it is important to have good footwear that will keep your feet warm and dry**. Please plan for the worst which includes temperatures of close to freezing or slightly below at night, and possible precipitation of rain and/or wet snow each day. Ensure your clothing and gear is suitable for these conditions. The alpine campsite may be on snow in early season (June/July) courses, please plan for that possibility.

Crampons are required, there are many styles of attachment systems, yet any **general mountaineering** crampon will work, if they are compatible with your boots.

On Day-1 of your course in Squamish, you are welcome to bring rock climbing shoes. If you do not have them, CWMS will supply them for you on that day, please let us know in advance. You will not require rock shoes for the 5-day alpine portion

We encourage people to share tents and cooking gear/stoves. If you already have a team or partner planned, this is great. There will be opportunity in Squamish on the first day to coordinate communal gear, check your technical gear and ask questions about specific items.

MAPS

The best map for the Blackcomb and Spearhead region is a map by John Baldwin called Backcountry Whistler (2nd edition), this is a 1:25,000 scale based on NTS data; and, the National Topographic Systems (NTS) map "92-J-02" in the 1:50,000 series is another standard map, though not as good detail.

View the Spearheads, Mt Trorey, Mt Pattison and Tremor Glacier course locations on Google Earth as well here - <https://goo.gl/maps/GE589MLoJME2>.

If you have a mapping application on your phone such as Garmin, Avenza or GaiGPS, ensure it is updated and the maps for the Blackcomb/Spearhead Range area are downloaded for off-line viewing.

FOOD AND COOKING

Your food planning for the Alpine portion of this trip should be very similar to a backpacking trip of the same length. You can plan and prepare your food before the course, but there will also be time provided in Squamish during the first day of the course to purchase food for the alpine portion of the course. Squamish has a good variety of grocery stores (as well as 3 good quality outdoor gear stores). Here are a few notes to help:

- * review your food carefully and measure out your portions to avoid bringing excess food.
- * you will only need to carry your food in on the first day, after that everything will stay at a base camp
- * you will have a lot of time in the evenings for preparing meals
- * breakfasts should be quick and easy (no gourmet pancake breakfasts, please)
- * Lunches should be planned to be easy and can be eaten during short breaks. Do not plan on a long "lunch break" - more likely you will be eating during small breaks in travel and teaching.
- * bring lots of snack food that is easy to access
- * Anticipate storing your food in safe location away from rodents, ravens, bears and other animals - bring storage bags (stuff sacs) to store your food in. Storage may be buried in snow or hung from trees.
- * There are ample water sources at the campsites and on the approaches. Most water sources are clean, but to be on the safe side we suggest bringing purification drops such as Pristine, or a filter.

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SAFETY PLANNING

Our Instructors will have a Satellite phone or Inreach device for the course, as well as all the emergency first aid kits and gear to take care of any situation. We have a daily check-in protocol by Sat device as well. Cell Phone reception is not reliable in the alpine course areas.

Please leave a Trip Plan with a responsible person. For the purposes of this course, they should contact Canada West Mountain School at 1-604-878-7007 (alternate #604-815-3451), or info@themountainschool.com. Please be sure that you follow up with your check-in contact person when you finish your course on the last day, to avoid unnecessary alarms and SAR callouts!

ACTION ITEMS

- 1) Please confirm with us that you received this Pre-Planning document, Gear List and Course outline
- 2) Indicate if you **require** CWMS to supply any of the following gear, or if **you will supply** this gear:
 - Ice ax
 - harness
 - helmet
 - carabiners
 - belay device
 - rock shoes for Day-1

- 3) Let CWMS know if you need a ride, or if you can provide a ride, we will help to coordinate that for you.
- 4) Let CWMS know if you would like to share any communal gear with another participant, we will put you in touch with each other (tent, stove/cookware, food prep)
- 5) Lastly, ask any other questions that you may have!

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