



Canada West Mountain School - www.themountainschool.com

Mountain Skills Essentials pre-planning

This document will help you finalize your preparations for the course. Please read over all the information completely, there are a few **"action items"** at the end of this document 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

You will spend the full 4 days of the course in Garibaldi Park backcountry, in the Spearhead Range behind Blackcomb Mountain.

Access will be via the Blackcomb Mountain Gondola starting at the Base of Blackcomb (not in the Village). The Gondola will take everyone to the start of the backcountry trails on Blackcomb at 1,860 meters in elevation, avoiding the extra time and energy required to hike up to treeline. From the trailhead the hike to the course area in the mountains is out the Overlord Trail and then on into the backcountry near Diseased Ridge. The hike in will take between 2 hours and is about 3 kilometers with approx. 150 meters of elevation gain. Your campsite will be above treeline at 1,900 meters, where you will be based for 3 nights and 4 days. Each of the 4 days will be spent learning and practicing skills in the surrounding alpine areas.

MAPS

The best maps for this area are 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.

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, make sure it is updated and the local maps for the Blackcomb area and Spearhead Range area are downloaded for off-line viewing.

LOGISTICS

On the morning of Day-1, you will meet at 0800 in Whistler in the Wizard Grill at the base of Blackcomb Mountain. Here is a link to Google Maps - <https://goo.gl/maps/6fnCVNoAwmf6z2sD9>. You will meet with your Guide/Instructor, as well as the other students, and spend approx. 2 hour reviewing gear, confirming food preparations, looking at the route options and finalizing logistics details before loading 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 4 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.

INSTRUCTOR TEAM

Your course will be led by one of the Canada West Mountain School Alpine and Mountaineering Course Instructors. All CWMS Mountaineering Instructors are certified members of the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides (ACMG).

TRANSPORTATION

Every person is responsible for transportation to/from the course area, though we do encourage ride sharing. 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

A gear list should be attached to this pre-course package for your reference. For personal and backpacking gear, this will be the same equipment that you would expect to take on an overnight backpacking trip. You will be working each day in and on snow, so it is important to have good footwear that will keep your feet warm and dry. Please plan for weather which includes temperatures of close to freezing or slightly below at night, and possible precipitation of rain and/or wet snow each day. Please ensure your clothing and gear is suitable for these conditions.

Crampons are required for this course. There are many styles of attachment systems yet any general mountaineering crampon will work, but ensure they are compatible with your boots.

For communal gear, we encourage people to share tents and cooking gear/stoves. If you already have a team or partner planned, this is great. If not, please let us know and we can help coordinate this for you and out you in contact with other students.

FOOD AND COOKING

Your food planning for this trip should be very similar to a backpacking trip of the same length. 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
- * Bring storage bags (stuff sacs) to store your food in. Storage may be buried in snow or hung from trees or rocks.
- * There are ample water sources at the campsite and on the approach. Most water sources are clean, but to be on the safe side we suggest using purification drops such as Pristine, or a filter.

SAFETY PLANNING

Our Instructors will have a Satellite phone or Inreach device for the course, as well as all the emergency and 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 that you have received this Pre-Planning document, Gear List and Course outline
- 2) Indicate if you require CWMS to supply any of the following gear:
 - Ice ax, harness, helmet, carabiners, belay device, 7 mm climbing cord, 120 cm sling.
- 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.
- 5) **Lastly, ask any other questions that you may have!**

Enjoy your course,

The Canada West Mountain School team