



Canada West Mountain School - [www.themountainschool.com](http://www.themountainschool.com)

## Complete Mountaineering pre-planning

Please take the time to read over all the information completely. We welcome and encourage any questions so that we can ensure you are best prepared for your course. Thank you!

### MOUNTAINEERING COURSE SURVEY

Complete this short online survey to allow us to prepare logistics, gear, and other details:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScTidYFMrVCjy5Eq9jVKKE0KWI8mFFIpTP1Pc2nxJJY4Z0v8A/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScTidYFMrVCjy5Eq9jVKKE0KWI8mFFIpTP1Pc2nxJJY4Z0v8A/viewform?usp=sf_link)

### COURSE LOCATION

The standard format for this course is to conduct the first 2 days in Squamish, followed by 5 days in a local alpine backcountry region. The 2 days in Squamish are spent training in the climbing areas, and do not include evening sessions, so participants can return home for the evenings, or stay at a local campground or accommodation in Squamish. Here is a link to the Tourism Squamish site with all the accommodation providers - <https://www.exploresquamish.com/lodging>. The 5 days in the alpine include 4 nights of wilderness camping, everyone needs to be prepared with their own tent and camping supplies.

The alpine portion of this course will be conducted in one of a variety of alpine locations, based on current conditions. Most trailhead's are located between 800 meters and 1200 meters elevation, with the hike into the basecamp areas taking about 3-4 hours. Campsite will be at, or above treeline, and often require camping on snow.

### MEETING LOCATION & TIME

On the morning of Day-1, you will **meet at 0800 at the Squamish Adventure Centre**, located on Highway 99 as you are entering Squamish proper. Here is a link to Google Maps - <https://goo.gl/maps/1eeEB9WmZzr>. You will spend approx. 1 hour getting to know your team, reviewing gear, and finalizing logistics before heading out to the local climbing area to begin the training.

### INSTRUCTOR TEAM

Your course will be led by one of our regular Mountaineering Course Instructors, all who are members of the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides (ACMG). You will be notified in advance of the course who the specific Guide/Instructor is.

### TRANSPORTATION

Every participant is responsible for transportation to/from the course meeting locations and trailheads. Some trailheads may require driving on gravel forestry roads that may include steep and loose sections. Most higher-clearance 2-wheel drive cars and crossover vehicles can get up these roads fine. For each course location, transportation needs will be discussed in advance of the specific course. Do not leave anything of value in your vehicle, as all parking is in remote and unpatrolled regions.

### GEAR

A gear list is located on our Website here - <https://themountainschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/GEAR-Mountaineering-2021.pdf>. For personal backpacking gear, you will require the same equipment that you would expect to take on an overnight backpacking trip. Plan for the worst conditions, including temperatures below freezing at night and rain and/or wet snow each day. Ensure your clothing and gear is suitable for these conditions as a worst-case option; however, it may also be hot, dry, and sunny as well (hopefully!)

The following technical gear can be supplied and is included in the course fee (*please request in advance*):

- **Ice ax; Harness; Helmet; Carabiners & Belay device; 7 mm climbing cord & 120 cm sewn sling.**



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### **FOOTWEAR**

During the alpine portion, you will be working each day on (and in) the snow, so it is important to have good footwear that will keep your feet warm and dry. Please review this post on our website for guidance on suitable boots for a mountaineering course – <https://themountainschool.com/how-to-choose-mountaineering-boots/>

Crampons are required for this course. There are many styles, yet any general mountaineering crampon will work, if they have front points designed for snow (not technical ice); and, they are compatible with your boots. If you rent crampons, please double check that they fit your boots while you are in the rental shop.

During the Squamish training days, simple trail shoes are appropriate, though we encourage people to use their mountain boots as much as possible to get accustomed to climbing with them. Technical rock-climbing shoes are supplied for some lessons, but if you have your own climbing shoes, please bring them.

### **MAPS**

The required maps for each location will be detailed in advance of your specific course.

You can download 1:20,000 scale maps as a PDF File free, from the BC Government website here - <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/geographic-data-services/topographic-data/topographic-map-viewer>. Launch the Map Viewer Tool and then enter the map number (if you know it) in the search term for the Mapsheet search; or enter the name of a prominent feature (mountain, lake, etc.) in the Geographic Name search field. Once you locate your area of interest, you can click on the download link to get the 1:20,000 scale map sheet and you can print this (or a portion of the map)

We also encourage people to download a GPS App (GaiaGPS, Avenza or Fatmaps are 3 common map apps). If you have a mapping application on your phone or GPS, make sure the map data is updated prior to heading out, and the local maps for your area are downloaded for off-line viewing, as cell reception is often not available in the mountain course areas.

### **FOOD AND COOKING**

Food planning for the 5-day alpine section should be the same as 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 carry your food in on the first day, after that everything will stay at base camp (except lunches each day)
- 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 prep 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. Food may be hung from trees, cliff faces or buried in snow. While bears are not usually a concern, we will follow best practices as this area is still bear habitat. Rodents, Pine Martins, Ravens, and Crows are also a concern to be aware of when storing food. CWMS supplies animal resistant bags for each person as well, to put your own food bag into.
- There are ample water sources at the campsite and on most approaches. Most water sources are clean, but we still suggest using purification drops such as Pristine, tablets, or a water filter.



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### **PRE-COURSE SKILLS PRACTICE**

This course Introduces technical skills involving rope management. While all these skills are taught and practiced during the course, we ask everyone to prepare by viewing these links to the basic knots and hitches that will be used extensively on the course. Please ensure that you arrive to the course well practiced and familiar with these basics (you can use any type of cord, rope, or string to practice with):

- Basic Overhand knot - <https://www.animatedknots.com/overhand-knot>
- Basic Figure 8 - <https://www.animatedknots.com/figure-8-knot>
- Figure-8 "follow through" knot - <https://www.animatedknots.com/figure-8-follow-through-loop-knot>
- Girth hitch - <https://www.animatedknots.com/girth-hitch-knot>
- Prussik hitch - <https://www.animatedknots.com/prusik-knot>
- Double Fisherman's - <https://www.animatedknots.com/double-fishermans-bend-knot>

Also, you will receive a link to join the Canada West Mountain School Virtual Classroom for our Mountain Navigation Online Course. This link will be sent by separate email, you will need to follow the instructions to login to the Virtual Classroom and get access to the course.

### **ALPINE TRAINING PREPARATION**

During the first 2 days of the course in Squamish, time will be dedicated to review the gear for the alpine portion, as well as planning the final 5 days of the course. There are a few good large grocery stores in Squamish, 3 high quality outdoor stores and many other services, and you will have time at the end of each of the first 2 days to finalise your gear and pack for the mountains.

### **WEATHER**

The course will be conducted in most weather conditions. If the alpine weather forecast is too poor for running the course safely in this region, we will notify you of alternate locations and logistics. Here is a link to the Squamish Environment Canada forecast - [http://weather.gc.ca/city/pages/bc-50\\_metric\\_e.html](http://weather.gc.ca/city/pages/bc-50_metric_e.html), and for another weather site, [SpotWX](http://SpotWX.com). Please monitor the weather in advance of the course.

### **SAFETY PLANNING**

Our Guides will have a Satellite phone or Inreach device for the course, as well as all the emergency first aid kits and gear. We have a daily check-in protocol by Sat device as well.

We encourage people to leave a Trip Plan with a responsible person before any of their wilderness trips. The online planning tool at AdventureSmart is a helpful tool - <https://plan.adventuresmart.ca/>. For the purposes of this course, you will be returning before 7 pm on the final date of your course. If anyone needs to contact you, they should contact Canada West Mountain School at 1-604-878-7007 (alternate #604-815-3451), or [info@themountainschool.com](mailto:info@themountainschool.com) and we can pass a message on during the daily update.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

- 1) Please confirm by Email that you have received this Pre-Planning document.
- 2) Complete the Google Forms Survey as soon as possible.
- 3) Review the Covid-19 Screening form and be prepared to complete the form on Day-1.
- 4) Review the Waiver in advance and be prepared to sign this on Day-1.
- 5) Review and complete the Medical Disclosure form and send it in by email; or print it and bring to the course. If you cannot do this, your instructor will have paper copies as well to be completed on Day-1.
- 6) If you are under the age of 19, please contact our office by email or phone prior to the course.
- 7) **Please ask any other questions that you may have!**

Enjoy your course,

**The Canada West Mountain School team**