



Canada West Mountain School - www.themountainschool.com

Complete Mountaineering pre-planning - 2021

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

COURSE LOCATIONS

The first 2 days are conducted in Squamish, BC, and do not include evening sessions. 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 following 5-day alpine portion of the course will be conducted in one of a variety of alpine locations, based on current conditions. Most trailheads are located between 800 meters and 1200 meters elevation, with the hike into the basecamp areas usually taking about 3-4 hours. Locations for the Alpine portion will be decided a few days in advance of the course, based on current weather, snow conditions, trail reports and other factors.

The 5 days in the alpine include 4 nights of wilderness camping, everyone needs to be prepared with their own tent and camping supplies. Campsites will be at, or above treeline, and often requires camping on snow.

MEETING LOCATION & TIME

On the morning of Day-1, you will **meet at 0900 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>.

WAIVER & MEDICAL DISCLOSURE FORM

All participants must complete a Waiver and Medical Disclosure form before attending Canada West Mountain School programs. Please complete this in advance – www.waiverfile.com/b/CanadaWestMountainSchool2

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. 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 lots are in remote and unpatrolled regions.

GEAR

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

For technical climbing equipment, the following gear can be supplied and is included in the course fee, please *request in advance* if you require any of the following:

- Ice ax
- Harness
- Helmet
- Carabiners
- Belay device (suitable for rappelling)
- 7 mm climbing cords & 120 cm sewn sling.



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INSTRUCTOR TEAM

All Instructors 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, as well as their contact details.

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/>

Mountaineering 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 hiking “spikes”); and, they are compatible with your boots. If you rent crampons, 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.

Paper maps can be purchased through most outdoor shops or downloaded online and printed at home. For printing Topo Maps in BC, 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>. You can print off full sized maps or select just a portion of the map to print.

We also encourage people to download a GPS App (GaiaGPS, Avenza or Fatmaps are common apps). Ensure the map data is updated prior to heading out, and the maps for your area are downloaded for off-line viewing, as cell reception is not reliable in course areas. Consider a backup power source for all electronics.

FOOD AND COOKING

Food for the alpine section is the same as a backpacking trip of the same length. Here are 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 basecamp.
- 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 to 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.
- Remove as much packaging in advance.
- Consider food that does not leave excessive waste, or that can be an animal attractant.
- All cooking will be done on stoves, no fires are used on CWMS Mountaineering courses.

We share these regions with bears and other wildlife and will follow best practices for safe food storage and handling. Food may be hung from trees, cliff faces or buried in snow. CWMS supplies animal resistant bags for each person as well, to put your own food bag into.

During the first 2 days in Squamish, time will be dedicated to review the gear and food planning for the final 5 days of the course. There are a few good large grocery stores in Squamish and 3 high quality outdoor stores. You will have time at the end of each of the first 2 days to prepare and pack for the mountains.



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CAMPING

Campsites are located at, or above, treeline. Plan on camping on snow for courses up until the end of July. Expect and plan for any weather including winds and heavy rain. All tents should be rigged with guy-lines that allow the tent to be properly secured and left unattended all day.

There are ample water sources at all campsites and on the approaches. While the water is all seasonal runoff from snowmelt, we still suggest using purification drops such as Pristine; tablets; or a water filter.

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. For alpine conditions, [SpotWX](#) provides a selection of weather models to compare in advance of the course dates.

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.

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. 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 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) Complete the Digital Waiver and Medical Disclosure form online (link provided above)
- 4) If you are under the age of 19, please contact our office by email or phone prior to the course.
- 5) **Please ask any other questions that you may have!**

Enjoy your course,

The Canada West Mountain School team