

Snowshoeing

Application

This standard applies to club-sponsored trips where snowshoes are used except for alpine scrambles climbs or trail runs that may use snowshoes for travel in winter conditions. This standard applies to any committee or branch sponsoring a snowshoe trip, including, but not limited to: Snowshoeing, Lodges, Singles, and Under-the –Hill-Rovers.

Trips

Trips will be rated in terms of both technical difficulty and strenuousness. Both ratings must be available to participants when they sign up.

Technical Rating System

The technical difficulty of a trip is specified as one of the following three values: Beginner, Basic, or Intermediate. Each value has a specific meaning defined as follows.

Rating	Description	Prerequisites
Beginner	Terrain is flat or gentle with minimal avalanche danger. Limited to Easy and Moderate routes.	Open to all properly equipped members and non-members of The Mountaineers.
Basic	No exposure to steep terrain which would require the use of an ice axe with minimal avalanche danger. Route can be of any strenuousness level.	Must be a student or graduate of Basic Snowshoeing, and students must have successfully completed the field trip prior to sign-up.
Intermediate	Exposure to terrain that may require the use of an ice axe and/or the use of avalanche tools: beacon, probe, and shovel. Route can be of any strenuousness level.	Must be a student or graduate of Intermediate Snowshoeing, Alpine Scrambling graduate, or Basic Climbing graduate. Intermediate Snowshoeing students must have successfully completed the field trip prior to sign-up.

Strenuousness Rating System

The strenuousness of a trip is classified as one of the following four values Easy, Moderate, Strenuous, or Very Strenuous. Each value has a specific meaning defined as follows.

- **Easy:** Up to 750 ft. elevation gain, and up to 6 miles round trip. Most likely on an established trail or road.
- **Moderate:** Up to 1,500 ft. elevation gain, and up to 8 miles round trip.
- **Strenuous:** Up to 2,500 ft. elevation gain, and up to 10 miles round trip.
- **Very Strenuous:** Over 2,500 ft. elevation gain, or over 10 miles round trip.

When assigning difficulty ratings, use the lowest rating that satisfies the limits for distance and gain. For example, a 7 mile route with 100 feet of gain exceeds the mileage limit for Easy. It satisfies the limit for Moderate and Strenuous, so the overall difficulty rating would be Moderate.

The trip description should include the total elevation gain over the course of the route.

The minimum party size is 3, and the maximum party size is 12 unless another maximum party limit applies.

The leader may require safety equipment appropriate for the trip, such as beacons, probes, shovels, ice axes, and/or crampons.

Leaders

Leaders must be approved to lead trips by the sponsoring committee.

Sponsoring committees or branches must be satisfied that Leaders of snowshoe trips have competence in the following skills as appropriate for the trips they are approved to lead:

- Winter travel skills
- Group leadership
- Use of topographical maps, compass, and altimeter
- Mountain safety, including identification of avalanche hazards, route selection, and group dynamics associated with decision-making in avalanche terrain
- Mountaineering Oriented First Aid / Wilderness First Aid (graduation from the MOFA or WFA course, or Equivalency)
- Emergency preparedness (including winter bivouacs and how to summon help should it be needed)

Leaders will be classified using a two-tiered badge system with the following differentiations.

Basic Snowshoe Leader	Intermediate Snowshoe Leader
Qualified to lead Beginner and Basic trips only Avalanche Awareness Training required	Qualified to lead all trips AIARE Level 1 Avalanche Training required

Participants

Participants are responsible for signing up only for trips that are within their capabilities, wearing suitable clothing, and carrying appropriate equipment, including the Ten Essentials.

Courses

Activity committees and branches may offer courses in snowshoeing and require them as prerequisites for trips. Established courses and their minimum content are:

Basic Snowshoeing

- Equipment and clothing selection
- Trip selection based on conditioning and skill level
- Snowshoe travel (on-snow practice)
- Avalanche hazards and safe travel principles
- Basic emergency preparedness (including prevention and treatment of hypothermia and frostbite, summoning help if needed, and protecting an injured or ill person until help arrives)

Intermediate Snowshoeing

- Equipment and clothing selection
- Trip selection based on conditioning and skill level
- Snowshoe travel (on-snow practice)
- Avalanche hazards and safe travel principles
- Using an avalanche beacon, probe, and shovel (on-snow practice)
- Ice axe use on steep slopes (on-snow practice including self-belay and self-arrest)
- Wilderness First Aid or equivalent
- Wilderness Navigation or equivalent
- Emergency preparedness (including winter bivouacs and how to summon help should it be needed)

Instructors

Snowshoe course instructors must be:

- Graduates of the course they are instructing (or have equivalency); or
- Approved Snowshoe Leaders; or
- Approved by the sponsoring committee to instruct

Related Clubwide Activity Standards

- General Standards for All Club Activities, under development
- AIARE Level 1 Avalanche Training
- Mountaineering Oriented First Aid (MOFA)
- Wilderness First Aid (WFA)

Comparable Standard

UIAA Standards for Voluntary Leaders and Instructors, October 2006

- Activity Standard 2: Winter Mountain Walking and Snowshoeing