



INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Ministry of Justice
BC Coroners Service
Canadian Avalanche Centre

Avalanche death prompts safety reminder

VICTORIA/REVELSTOKE - On Saturday, Jan. 18, 2014, one person was killed in an avalanche while snowmobiling near Valemount, B.C.

While everyone in the group was carrying essential safety gear—avalanche transceivers, probes and shovels—the victim could not be located for over three hours.

Locating an avalanche victim quickly is a critical factor in increasing their odds of survival.

“Avalanche victims have an 80 per cent chance of survival if found and dug out within 10 minutes of burial, but the odds drop dramatically after that,” said Canadian Avalanche Centre (CAC) executive director Gilles Valade. “After just 35 minutes, there’s less than a 10 per cent chance of survival.”

The CAC and the BC Coroners Service (BCCS) would like to remind all winter backcountry users that familiarity with their avalanche transceiver is vital. Modern digital transceivers are very intuitive tools, but practice is still required in order to become adept with their use.

The CAC and the BCCS urge everyone who recreates in the winter backcountry to take a two-day Avalanche Skills Training course in order to learn essential safety skills, and practice them before entering avalanche terrain.

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