

AVALANCHE!

Understand and reduce risks from Avalanches

ISBN: **9781852844738** (Short Code: 473)

Publication Date: **November 2015**

Price: **£7.99**

Edition: **First**

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pvc Sleeve, 112 pages

15.5cm x 10.0cm

This little guide will assist a wider understanding of the phenomenon of avalanches, through the use of both objective data and the accounts of witnesses and survivors. It reveals some of the indications which, for those who know how to interpret them, will enable a local assessment of avalanche hazard to be made and a number of pitfalls to be avoided. Finally, it provides some rules of thumb, be it for freeriders, ski tourers, walkers or climbers, that will permit safer travel on the mountains.

People say avalanches are unpredictable. Is that true? And even if it is, is that an excuse for throwing your life away?

It is certainly true that no-one is in a position to claim that they can predict every avalanche, and it has to be said that some are particularly baffling, even for the most experienced. Nevertheless, an avalanche is not a supernatural event, and even without expert knowledge of the release mechanisms in all their complexity, it is still possible to identify the majority of hazardous situations. It is enough to be able to 'read' the mountain to reduce considerably the threat posed by the 'white death'.

Key marketing points

- The most comprehensive guide to avalanche risk
- assessment
- Suitable for participants in all winter sports

About the author

Robert Bolognesi, PhD, Polytechnic of Lausanne, graduate of the Institute of Alpine Geography, Grenoble, is a former researcher at the Federal Snow and Avalanche Research Centre, Davos, avalanche control practitioner, and founder of METEORISK, specialising in the amelioration of

weather-related risks.

Translation by Blyth Wright, head of the Scottish Avalanche Information Service.

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