

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Wed Oct 30, 2024

This is Alex Marienthal with pre-season avalanche, weather, and event information for the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center on Wednesday, October 30. This information is sponsored by [**The Friends of the Avalanche Center**](#). We will update this bulletin as conditions warrant.

Mountain Weather

Snowfall on Monday night and Tuesday delivered up to 6" in the mountains, and cooler weather has settled in through at least next weekend. Temperatures are teens to 20s F this morning. Wind has been out of the west-northwest and shifted southerly this morning. Temperatures for the next few days will be high teens to low 20s overnight with daytime highs reaching high 20s to low 30s F. Wind will be out of the southwest at 5-15 mph with gusts to 25 mph. Another round of light snowfall is expected Thursday through Saturday morning with 3-5" in most of our forecast area, and up to 8" possible in the mountains south of Big Sky to West Yellowstone and Island Park.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



All Regions

The mountains are turning white which means avalanche season is here. There is 0-8" of settled snow at weather stations and many slopes have grass and rocks poking through or are still bare ground. However, there is a slightly deeper snowpack on high elevation, shady slopes, especially where snow from earlier storms was drifted deeper in gullies and near ridgelines. These slopes are where you could find a layered snowpack and trigger an avalanche.

Watch out for steep slopes where recent snow has drifted into a slab on top of older snow. Because few slopes exist with a deeper snowpack, they are not only the most likely place to trigger an avalanche, but also the most attractive place to ski or ride. A scary combination. Avalanches of wind-drifted snow will be shallow and generally small, but even small slides can injure or be fatal, especially if they drag you into rocks, trees, over cliffs or pile up deep in a confined gully.

Early season avalanches in southwest Montana have seriously injured and buried skiers ([**2012 Incident Report**](#)), caught and injured hunters ([**2015 Incident Report**](#)), and resulted in tragic fatalities ([**2017 Incident Report**](#)).

Whether you are skiing, hunting, ice-climbing or hiking you should consider the potential for avalanches if you travel on snow covered slopes. Choose slopes less than 30 degrees steep to avoid being in avalanche terrain, or carefully assess the snowpack for unstable drifts before riding or crossing steep slopes.

Remember the basics of avalanche safety if you plan to travel on snow-covered slopes.

- Beacons, shovels and probes are requisite equipment for each party member. Helmets and airbags are excellent additions.
- Only expose one person at a time to avalanche terrain ([**slopes steeper than 30 degrees**](#)) while partners look on from a safe area nearby.
- Watch for red flags that indicate instability, such as recent avalanche activity, cracking and collapsing. If these are present, avoid steep slopes.

- If there is enough snow to ride, there is enough snow to slide. Dig down and test the snowpack for instability before considering travel in avalanche terrain.

Before you get out this season, check over your avalanche gear ([video](#)), refresh your skills by practicing avalanche rescue with your backcountry partners ([video](#)) and sign up for an avalanche class. Our [education calendar](#) lists local courses the Friends of the Avalanche Center and other regional providers offer.

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

Our education calendar is full of awareness lectures and field courses. Check it out: [Events and Education Calendar](#).

Friends Fall Powder Blast Fundraiser

The Friends of GNFAC had a successful **Powder Blast Fundraiser**. Thank you to the sponsors, everyone who attended, bid on the silent auction or donated. We are still accepting general donations, so if you missed the party last week and want to support avalanche outreach and education you can still contribute to the fall fundraising campaign [HERE](#).