

# ADVANCED MOUNTAINEERING COURSE



*Alaska Mountaineering School (AMS) promotes excellence in responsible mountaineering and wilderness travel by educating and guiding others. Our core curriculum for all classes focuses on safety and judgment, leadership, teamwork, mountaineering skills, Leave No Trace principles, and the enjoyment of experiencing the great wilderness of Alaska.*

## THIS COURSE

---

The advanced mountaineering course is an excellent opportunity to build on a solid foundation of essential skills while pursuing mountaineering responsibly within a remote glaciated environment. The course gives experienced climbers the opportunity to learn and apply new skills in a challenging mountaineering location. The course takes you point to point over long distances, climbing increasingly difficult peaks along the way. The class builds on the basics of glacier travel and crevasse rescue skills; snow, rock, and ice climbing techniques; and avalanche, winter camping, and environmental studies. Ten (10) days provides enough time to apply these skills and expand to intermediate and advanced processes and techniques in a real environment with real consequences. Throughout the course, participants learn by doing in a remote environment, gaining confidence to live comfortably on a glacier, travel long distances while roped together, climb moderate peaks, and progress to more advanced technical routes. Students learn to live the mountain life and hone the skills taught; the 10-day time frame also allows for weather days without impeding learning objectives. The prerequisites are that participants arrive in excellent physical condition, have a positive attitude and a desire to learn, foster an open mind, and be willing to work hard as a team member. Applicants should have at least two (2) years prior roped climbing experience, be comfortable in exposed locations, and be familiar with belaying, building anchors, and rappelling. Winter camping experience is encouraged. With instructors' guidance, students evaluate terrain, identify hazards, and make route-finding decisions. Focus is placed on decision-making skills necessary for making successful peak ascents in the Alaska Range.

## SPECIFICATIONS

---

*Deposit:* \$500, due upon registration

*Course balance due:* 60 days prior to the starting date

*Group limit:* 6 students, 2 instructors

*Tuition includes:* Professional instructors, roundtrip glacier flight; all food during your course and team lunch at AMS HQ on day 1; all group camping and climbing equipment: ropes, tents, pickets, technical climbing gear, snow saws, wands; sled for each student, pre-rigged for roped glacier travel for use during the climb; snow kitchen equipment: kitchen tents,

cooking stoves, utensils, and fuel; mountain communications: emergency use satellite phone, FRS on-mountain radios, Delorme inReach; maps, GPS; medical protocols, first aid, medication and repair kits; fully equipped staging area at AMS HQ and AMS Mountain Shop in Talkeetna; 24/7 support from staff at AMS in Talkeetna during your climb; regular social media updates during your climb; luggage storage and free parking during your course; camping at AMS HQ campground (tents are not provided); 10% discount at the AMS Mountain Shop in Talkeetna; welcome-back table with fresh foods and drinks after your course; knowledgeable staff to assist with lodging and shuttle logistics.

*You are responsible for:* Transportation to and from Talkeetna, lodging in Talkeetna, travelers cancellation insurance (highly recommended), personal equipment and clothing, and AMS equipment rentals.

## FEATURES

---

- 1:3 instructor/student ratio, up to 6 students
- Mountaineering skills: protection, anchors, belay, self-arrest, snow, ice, and/or rock climbing
- Peak ascents progression
- Glacier travel and crevasse rescue techniques
- Snow camping: walls, caves, igloos, quinzees, trenches
- Avalanche curriculum: mechanics, transceiver searches, snow morphology
- Rescue scenarios and techniques to reach a fallen climber
- First aid classes: frostbite, hypothermia, altitude-related illnesses

## EXPEDITION STYLE & REMOTENESS

---

AMS mountaineering courses are self-reliant expeditions that travel in a remote location in Denali National Park and Preserve. Once the plane drops off the group, if weather becomes unflyable, evacuation to modern medical facilities may take several days. Throughout the course, students learn to enjoy living in a glaciated mountain environment, prepare awesome meals, while caring for themselves and each other, and climb "harder-than-they-look" Alaskan mountains. AMS course format emphasizes hands-on

learning and the application of new skills in a variety of terrain. AMS courses model climbing and camping techniques that prepare students to pursue mountaineering in the most severe environments.

#### ENVIRONMENT & COURSE LOCATION

---

Mountaineering courses fly into Denali National Park and Preserve, home to America's biggest and wildest mountains. A few days prior to the start date, instructors will choose the specific mountain region and glacier for the course. They look for pristine wilderness and good quality climbing routes suitable for teaching our mountaineering progression. The exact location will depend on current snow and landing conditions. Most courses fly into the Alaska Range, and common areas we work in are the Pika, Ruth, Kahiltna, or Eldridge glaciers. We also visit high-elevation glaciated terrain in the Chugach or Talkeetna mountains. Each of the areas chosen—with their variety of terrain, beauty, and isolation—are challenging and demand respect. The routes are classic for a mountaineering expedition in Alaska. In addition to the course features, April and May courses provide colder temperatures and superior winter skills and snow climbing conditions. Expect to be on snow for the duration of the course and be prepared to encounter all types of weather and conditions. Alaska is full of surprises!

#### WILDERNESS ETHICS

---

Preserving the wilderness character of the terrain we live and work in is a long-standing priority at AMS. We have climbed on all continents and Alaska's mountains remain among the world's cleanest; and we strive to keep it that way. Our courses practice Leave No Trace camping and climbing techniques and follow current and progressive human waste and trash removal management techniques. To enhance wilderness experience and take advantage of better climbing conditions, we often travel in the cooler temperatures of the night and early mornings; this allows us to climb and travel on firmer snow conditions and to enjoy undisturbed mountain soundscapes. We avoid broadcasting of music to be considerate of other climbers and are strategic in our choice of campsite locations. Our instructors work closely with NPS mountaineering rangers to identify current mountain hazards and to document and report unethical camping and climbing teams. We believe that our national park lands are treasures of North America, and we practice clean visitation practices and wilderness preservation education through the duration of all of our climbs and programs.

#### COURSE PROGRESSION

---

The goal of this course is to expound upon the skills and good judgment to climb in any remote mountain region. Our

intent is to prepare students so that they can return to the Alaska Range or other remote environment without instructors and repeat what they accomplished during the course. To help fulfill this goal, instructors follow an extensive class list and carefully thought-out course progression. From day one you will be practicing glacier camping techniques for winter conditions. The first day is spent reviewing the skills necessary for everyone to route-find safely on a glacier, and to rescue others and self-rescue in the event of a crevasse fall. After a review of these basics for an Alaska expedition, glacier travel and winter camping, the course focuses on specific climbing and long distance glacier traversing objectives. Peak ascents are chosen to compliment classes on climbing techniques and student goals. The course breaks camp and moves to new locations to explore and climb in a variety of terrain. Short-pitching, aid climbing, technical descents, and avalanche curriculum are all on the agenda. With peak ascents being the final objectives, the course progresses to more advanced terrain and steeper snow and proceeds through crampon techniques, running belays, and avalanche assessment and rescue skills. Depending on conditions, ice or rock climbing is also taught. Rescue scenarios are practiced. Transference of skills leads to transference of responsibility; and by the middle of the course, students are leading rope teams and making route-finding decisions under the watchful eyes of instructors. You will also receive personalized written evaluations at the end of the course to provide guidance for future climbs and compliment your resume.

#### THE FIRST DAY

---

On the starting day of the course, students and instructors meet at 8:00 a.m. at AMS. We will have muffins and fresh brewed coffee, tea, and juice waiting for you, but you may want to enjoy the popular breakfast at the Talkeetna Roadhouse before meeting time. It is a busy day, and we ask you to please be on time and take care of all personal business beforehand. Instructors begin with a course orientation and introductions, after which we divide into two groups. In one group, instructors check each student's gear and equipment to make sure that it is adequate; rentals needed are issued at this time. (We will not check gear prior to the start date, because instructors are busy up to that moment briefing and packing.) The other group goes to the food room where students pack their own bulk lunches with specific advisement of instructors. Next comes our midday lunch provided by AMS. After lunch, we practice knots and fixed line ascension; then pack up, weigh our gear, and dress for the glacier. We load into the van and take a very short drive to the NPS ranger station in Talkeetna. After paying our park entrance fee and visiting the ranger station, we arrive at Talkeetna Air Taxi to fly onto the glacier in a ski-equipped fixed wing plane, such as a Cessna 185 or a DeHaviland Beaver or Otter. The 30–45 minute flight into Denali National Park and Preserve is the quickest way to

access the snowy, glaciated peaks of the Alaska Range and is a spectacular and memorable highlight of the course. After arriving on the glacier, the rest of the evening consists of campsite selection, tent spacing, group kitchen set up, stove use and care, and, of course, dinner!

---

#### UNFLYABLE WEATHER

---

Be aware that Alaska's weather is often unpredictable and can possibly prevent flying into or out of the mountains on schedule. Bush planes only fly when the weather is safe and suitable. In the event that courses are unable to fly to the glacier at the scheduled time, we base activities out of the AMS Talkeetna facilities, which consist of the office and staging area, schoolhouse, and indoor climbing wall. This allows instructors and students to stay on track with course curriculum, view photo presentations and educational media, and practice fixed line ascension and other climbing techniques. Although it happens rarely, persistent stormy weather at the beginning of the course can result in a location change to the Talkeetna or Chugach Mountains. These nearby ranges provide excellent mountaineering objectives for us to achieve our goals. Unflyable weather usually persists only for a day or two; however sometimes courses can be weathered in the Alaska Range beyond their end date. We will do our best to ensure that your course ends on schedule and most courses do. Still, we recommend allowing 2 days on the return end of your travel plans (and/or purchasing flexible airline tickets) in the event of delays. Please refer to the *Course Travel and Logistics* sheet.

---

#### LEADERSHIP & TEAMWORK

---

Successful courses are properly equipped and have the necessary skills, but most importantly they learn to become a strong team. Good leadership reflects the art of effective team building. Each day your instructors teach classes, hold discussions, and initiate you into the world of expedition life. As your course progresses, you will show signs of strength: tight camps, efficient travel techniques, and strong teamwork. We expect you to stay organized, participate all the way, and have fun while supporting the goals of the course. Of primary importance is taking responsibility for monitoring yourself: you know best how you feel, how you sleep, how you recover each day. As a team, we can help if someone is having a bad day; but ultimately every member must be a regular contributor, and a safety minded and efficient climber who helps with camp chores, to be successful. Not participating, climbing unsafely, or failing to meet the day-to-day demands will lead to your departure from the course. We expect you to maintain good expedition behavior: taking initiative and being supportive, solution-oriented, hard working, and patient. In return you will be rewarded with the adventure of a lifetime.

---

#### INSTRUCTORS

---

AMS instructors are unique professionals who love the mountains in Alaska and have a gift for climbing, teaching, and mountain guiding. Our instructors are talented climbers with extensive backcountry experience. Lead instructors have a wealth of experience climbing in the Alaska Range as well as teaching mountaineering progressions. All of our staff are familiar with altitude-related problems and extreme weather, and they know how to set the pace for a successful course. Every one of them has mountain rescue, avalanche safety, Leave No Trace minimum impact certification, and Wilderness First Responder medical training. Their knowledge of the natural and climbing history of the area and personal stories of climbing in Alaska add immensely to every program.

---

#### FOOD

---

We provide hearty, nutritious, and balanced foods for all participants and programs. Do not expect to lose weight during this course. Students will be divided into cook groups of 2 to 4 people and you will learn to cook with MSR stoves and do your own cooking within your cook group during this course. Your instructors spend a full day packing bulk style breakfast and dinner food rations for the team in our custom-built food room. Bulk style food packing allows you the flexibility to choose your own meals depending on your preferences. This provides the opportunity to learn about meal planning while having classes on cooking techniques in the field. We believe that cooking home-style, nutritious meals is an important skill of mountain life. Looking forward to breakfast is a good start to the day, and looking forward to dinner helps us all push harder. While there will be plenty of food, including trail foods, for variety we recommend that you also bring 1 pound (0.5 kilo) of your favorite snacks from home. All our meals can accommodate vegetarians or other dietary requirements: Make sure to contact us if you need more specifics.

---

#### REFERENCES

---

Alaska Mountaineering School is a small, professionally run operation committed to high standards at all levels. The Alaska Range within Denali National Park is where we do the majority of our climbing, and we consider it our backyard. Our history guiding in the Alaska Range and on Denali reaches back to 1983, and everything we do today is built from hands-on experience. We urge you to carefully research climbing with us. Search for Alaska Mountaineering School and our directors, Caitlin Palmer and Colby Coombs, on the Internet. Talk to climbing rangers at the Talkeetna Ranger Station (907-733-2231). Call your local climbing store or climbing wall and ask if they have heard of us. AMS is small, but our word-of-mouth reputation extends far. Our guides and instructors represent a tight group of educators

and mountain guides with varied professional affiliations. A note on certification: other than our own Mountain Guides Course, there is no available certification in the United States or Europe that takes into account the expedition skills necessary to guide in the varied terrain and scope of the Alaska Range. AMS has developed a training program for our field staff that includes a time-tested apprenticeship program, technical training, and evaluation system, which results in mountain guides with a depth of Alaska Range knowledge found only at AMS.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

---

Each course is unique due to variables such as course area, participants, and environmental conditions. Working with these variables, it is our goal for each student to accomplish these objectives in the following areas.

*Safety and judgment.* AMS teaches mountaineering skills that promote the health and safety of all expedition members. Each graduate is expected to:

- Manage and demonstrate knowledge of the hazards of travelling and camping in a glaciated mountain environment,
- Participate in making sound decisions affecting the health and safety of the expedition,
- Display knowledge of personal limitations and the judgment to stay within them,
- Recognize and prevent cold injuries and altitude-related illnesses,
- Build a fortified snow camp.

*Leadership and teamwork.* Students are exposed to techniques of outdoor leadership, teamwork, and expedition behavior. Each graduate is expected to:

- Work effectively as a team member,
- Model good expedition behavior: being solution oriented and having a positive attitude and desire to achieve group goals,
- Effectively communicate ideas and concerns with individuals and within the group,
- Show initiative in teaching and leading peers,
- Employ leadership styles appropriate to the situation; support others in the leadership role,
- Use good decision-making and planning skills to participate fully in a safe, environmentally sound expedition,
- Display understanding of instructors' decision-making processes through discussion and questioning.

*Environmental ethics.* We strive to maintain minimum-impact techniques in our expedition strategy. Each graduate is expected to:

- Show respect for pristine wilderness and fostering respect in others,
- Understand minimum-impact living and traveling skills appropriate to a glaciated environment,
- Appreciate the concern for maintaining pristine quality in wilderness areas,

- Incorporate Leave No Trace techniques where appropriate.

*Winter camping.* Participants on AMS courses practice minimum-impact backcountry skills that are safe for the individual and environment. Each graduate is expected to:

- Select a campsite, build a fortified perimeter camp, and stay within the confines of wanded area,
- Live comfortably and learn efficient camping, cooking, and dressing for a variety of conditions,
- Organize and take care of personal and group equipment,
- Build a snow kitchen and prepare nutritious meals.

*Mountaineering skills.* The course goal is to advance all students' climbing ability and make them well-rounded mountaineers. Each graduate is expected to:

- Master knots and various rope handling techniques,
- Place snow protection and build anchors,
- Understand and demonstrate belay techniques appropriate to the situation: glacier travel, running protection, and fixed lines,
- Competently set up 2, 3, and 4-person rope teams with sleds for glacier travel,
- Set up a Z-pulley system and ascend a fixed line,
- Demonstrate efficient and safe glacier travel, route-finding techniques, and navigation skills,
- Recognize and avoid avalanche terrain, make stability assessments, and demonstrate avalanche transceiver search techniques,
- Demonstrate proficient crampon and ice axe techniques for snow, ice and/or mixed terrain,
- Demonstrate belay skills: fixed line, running belays, glacier travel,
- Understand fifth class lead climbing theory and application,
- Consistently perform techniques to reduce and avoid hazards,
- Recognize and avoid avalanche terrain,
- Demonstrate the ability to remain composed and thoughtful in difficult and exposed terrain,
- Competently lead a rope team on a safe route on a glacier,
- Demonstrate competent, efficient, and safe glacier travel, route-finding techniques, and navigation skills to avoid hazards,
- Demonstrate rock, snow, and ice climbing techniques for moderate and steep terrain,
- Demonstrate roped glacier travel techniques using snow shoes and lead rope a team,
- Take responsibility for the organization, maintenance and repair of group and personal equipment,
- Establish a skill base to be a strong expedition member and demonstrate leadership skills on mountaineering expeditions, such as climbing Denali.

## DAY-TO-DAY ITINERARY

---

Our Advanced Mountaineering course day-to-day itinerary is designed to make sure you get the most out of an Alaska mountaineering course. Your instructors teach wilderness, leadership, and technical climbing skills in a progression that develops competent and self-reliant climbers. By course end, you will have learned to identify and manage hazards; increased your technical knowledge in all aspects of glacier and alpine climbing; and learned and practiced leading your peers. Note that at the end of each day in this itinerary we debrief the current day and make fresh weather observations and analyses. We also choose a next-day leader and overview the day to come. The advanced course, like all our courses, remains flexible, to work with current conditions and student needs; the itinerary below is a sample of a typical course progression.

### *Briefing and Packing*

AMS likes organization and thoroughness. That requires time. Your instructors dedicate two days before the start date checking all the gear and packing food. Every stove is fired up, radio is checked, and rope is inspected. We adhere to the motto, "Prior planning prevents poor performance."

### *Day 1*

8:00 a.m.: Meet at AMS for course orientation and overview of the day. Check equipment and issue gear. Pack lunches. Calculate weights. This is a busy day, so please be on time.

12:00 p.m.: Lunch provided at AMS. Lasagna and salad.

1:00 p.m.: Learn intro to fixed line ascension at AMS' crevasse rescue facility. Classes: Knots, use of waist and chest harness and helmet, ascending techniques, releasing the backpack.

4:00 p.m.: Load van. 3 minute drive to ranger station and airport. Organize loads for fixed-wing.

4:30 p.m.: Fly onto the glacier. Reorganize loads for glacier travel. After snowshoeing while using orientation, rope up and travel short distance and establish camp: probe and wand the perimeter, build walls, make sleeping platforms, set up group kitchen, establish the bathroom.

6:00 p.m. Make dinner; students learn camp cooking. Classes: Site selection, tent spacing, shovel and snow saw use, wall building, tent pitching, hygiene and sanitation, group kitchen basics, stove use and care, cooking basics, bomb proofing the camp, staying warm at night. Evening discussion: Course goals and expectations, plus Denali National Park and Preserve history and regulations.

### *Day 2*

9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.: Full crevasse rescue scenarios in camp, 4, 3, 2-person rescue techniques.

12:30p.m.–6:00 p.m.: With full day packs, students organize themselves into rope teams. Group heads to crevasse for

self-rescue practice: the site is secured and anchors built for lowering and raising systems. Evening discussion: Sleds; altitude-related illnesses and cold injuries—and their prevention.

### *Day 3*

Camp is broken down and moved to a new location chosen based on proximity to peak ascents. Students lead the rope team and campsite selection processes. Once a perimeter is established, all except daypack gear is consolidated and rope teams leave for crevasse route-finding to a small peak ascent. After returning to camp, instructors stage a crevasse fall and rescue. Newest camp is built with individual megamid kitchens. Evening discussion: Avalanche I, II.

### *Days 4*

Pack up camp and move camp further down glacier for mountaineering techniques. Students lead rope teams in glacier travel along a 30-degree snow slope and negotiate crevasses. Evening discussion: Planning a peak ascent, turnaround times for climbs, route-finding, navigation.

### *Day 5*

All-day peak ascent includes route finding, running protection, and performing snow stability test pits. Snow climbing and crampon practice is followed by ice axe self-arrest practice. Site turns into a ground school for running protection and fixed lines. Student-led rope teams head back to camp, followed by avalanche transceiver searches. Evening discussion: Navigation, map reading, compass use, whiteout navigation.

### *Day 6*

Pack up camp and move to new location further down glacier through icefall, chosen based on proximity to next peak ascent. Student-led rope team rotation and campsite selection. Build snow shelter: digloo. Build snow walls, make quarry and efficiencies discussed. Evening discussion: Teaching styles, Alaska climbing history, geology and glaciology of Denali National Park and Preserve, summit day strategies, route ratings systems, leadership styles

### *Day 7*

Full day peak ascent increased in difficulty from previous climb. Includes route finding, running protection, fifth class belays, rappels, and students performing snow stability test pits. Evening discussion: Glaciology, Leave No Trace, snow shelters, summit day strategies, route ratings systems, leadership styles.

### *Day 8*

Travel to base of alpine routes. Rock, ice, mixed climbing and rappel day. Students have opportunity to practice leading while on top rope. Instructors follow and evaluate protection. Multi-pitch climbing demonstration. Classes: setting up a top rope, placing ice and rock protection, and movement techniques for vertical ice and rock climbing. Practice different rappelling techniques for a variety of

# TRAINING PREP & HELPFUL KNOTS



*Congratulations on your decision to join an AMS mountaineering course! Most graduates find our courses to be physically and mentally challenging experiences. Living and traveling on a glacier, adapting to 24 hours of daylight, taking part in a full regime of classes and practice sessions, and experiencing the intensity and beauty of the surroundings adds up to a challenging experience and environment. It is not just the heavy packs or the intense mileage, but the overall high magnitude of the course that is demanding. Please read the following information for advice on preparing for your course. We want all students to have a successful experience!*

AMS “role models” expert mountaineering skills and expeditionary prowess to prepare students for one of the most challenging environments in the world in the Alaska Range. While on an AMS course, you live in a remote, mountainous environment, camp on snow, and travel roped on a glacier while carrying a heavy pack and sometimes pulling a sled. The better physical condition you are in coming to the course, the more you will be able to take away in learning and achievements. Proper physical conditioning is important not only for your safety but for the safety of others. Fitness will add to your enjoyment and your ability to be a positive, contributing member. You will also need to know some basic knots and how to tie them easily and well.

## AM I IN SHAPE NOW? AND HOW TO GET THERE

---

Everyone has a different definition of what “being in shape” is. A good way to assess what kind of shape you are in is to head out for a hike carrying a backpack. Weigh the pack down using water containers that add up to 50 pounds, or 35% of your body weight, whichever is less. Hike 2 to 3 miles on a trail with hills. At your high point, empty the water containers to lighten your pack and to decrease the strain on your knees on the descent. This structured hike will give you an idea of your current fitness level. Remember, of course, to always take adequate time to warm up, stretch, and cool down to reduce the chances of injury.

If you haven’t done so already, start your physical conditioning program now. Begin by selecting an activity you enjoy doing, as you are then much more likely to continue with the program. While strength is important, for example for lifting a pack, it is more important to build up your aerobic fitness and stamina for the long days. Cycling, speed

walking, aerobics, stair climbing, jogging, rowing, skiing, hiking, yoga, and martial arts are all good forms of exercise. Practically any exercise that uses large muscle groups and gets you sweating and your heart rate up will increase stamina. Begin gradually and build up to 45 minutes to 1 hour of your workout at 80% of your maximum pulse rate. Exercise to an intensity level where it is difficult to hold a conversation. Schedule a time during the day for this and plan on four sessions per week at 45–60 minutes each. We recommend talking to a professional exercise physiologist who can help set up a conditioning program that is right for you.

Remember, you do not need to be a professional athlete to excel on an AMS course, but you do need to be within the limits of the average active person. A keen desire to learn, strong motivation, and a positive attitude are equally important to success. We look forward to seeing you on a course! Feel free to contact us with any questions.

## HELPFUL KNOTS TO KNOW

---

1. Figure 8 series, in particular, Figure 8 on a Bight
2. Flemish Bend
3. Mule Knot
4. Clove Hitch
5. Munter Hitch
6. Prusik Knot

A highly recommended resource for learning about glacier travel and crevasse rescue systems, as well as knots, is *Glacier Mountaineering, An Illustrated Guide to Glacier Travel and Crevasse Rescue* by Andy Tyson and Mike Clelland!



# COURSE MOUNTAINEERING PERSONAL GEAR CHECKLIST

Key: \$ = for purchase only, available at AMS; NC = available at no charge; N/A = not available at AMS or in Talkeetna. All rentals completed in Talkeetna.

Rental price: 1-6 days/7-12 days

Rental price 1-6 days/7-12 days

## FEET

<input type="checkbox"/> Socks (3 pairs)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Double mountaineering boots	\$50/75
<input type="checkbox"/> Gaiters	\$20/30
<input type="checkbox"/> Camp booties	\$10/15
<input type="checkbox"/> Rock shoes	NC

## UPPER BODY

<input type="checkbox"/> Base layer underwear	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Base layer, lightweight	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Base layer, midweight	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Insulation layer	\$10/15
<input type="checkbox"/> Hard shell jacket	\$25/35
<input type="checkbox"/> Insulated synthetic parka	\$30/40

## LOWER BODY

<input type="checkbox"/> Base layer underwear	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Base layer, lightweight	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Soft shell pants (optional)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Hard shell pants	\$30/40
<input type="checkbox"/> Insulated overpants	\$65

## HEAD/FACE/EYES

<input type="checkbox"/> Sun cap	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Bandana/buff	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Warm hat	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Glacier glasses	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Case for glasses	\$

## HANDS

<input type="checkbox"/> Liner gloves, medium-weight	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Insulated ski gloves	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Mittens (April & May)	\$15/20

## SLEEPING

<input type="checkbox"/> -15°F synthetic bag w/compression stuff sack	\$35/45
<input type="checkbox"/> Inflatable full-length sleeping pad	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Closed-cell foam sleeping pad, full-length	\$5/8

## BACKPACK / STORAGE

<input type="checkbox"/> Internal frame pack	\$40/60
<input type="checkbox"/> Small stuff sacks (2)	\$2/3 each
<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch stuff sacks (2)	\$3 each
<input type="checkbox"/> Tent stuff sack (1)	\$3/5
<input type="checkbox"/> Garbage bags (3)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Sled duffel	NC

## TRAVEL

<input type="checkbox"/> Snowshoes	\$25/35
<input type="checkbox"/> Avalanche transceiver	NC
<input type="checkbox"/> Avalanche probe	NC
<input type="checkbox"/> Avalanche shovel	NC
<input type="checkbox"/> Compass	NC

## SUN

<input type="checkbox"/> Lip balm	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen	\$

## TOILETRIES

<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet paper (single-ply)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Hand disinfectant	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Handi Wipes (6-12)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Travel toothbrush & toothpaste	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Sanitary supplies (women)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Pee bottle	\$

## CLIMBING

<input type="checkbox"/> Helmet	\$10/15
<input type="checkbox"/> Crampons w/ case	NC
<input type="checkbox"/> Ice axe	\$10/15
<input type="checkbox"/> Seat harness	\$10/15
<input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical ascender w/ sling	NC
<input type="checkbox"/> Carabiners (10)	\$1/2
<input type="checkbox"/> Locking carabiners (2)	\$2/3
<input type="checkbox"/> Glacier rig	NC

## EATING & DRINKING

<input type="checkbox"/> Mug	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Bowl w/ lid	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Spoon	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Water bottles (2)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Water bottle insulators (2)	\$4/6

## MISCELLANEOUS

<input type="checkbox"/> Pocket knife	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Watch w/ alarm	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> BIC lighter	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Earplugs	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Headlamp (March, April, August)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Notebook	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Pencil	\$

## MEDICAL

<input type="checkbox"/> Ibuprofen/Advil/Motrin (20 tablets)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Acetaminophen/Tylenol (20 tablets)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal, regular medications	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> Blister kit/moleskin	\$

## OPTIONAL ITEMS

<input type="checkbox"/> Favorite trail food, 1 lb	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Instant coffee	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Camera	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Nose guard	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Pee funnel (women)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Neoprene gloves (July)	\$10/16
<input type="checkbox"/> Half-length pad	\$2/3
<input type="checkbox"/> Overboots	\$15/20
<input type="checkbox"/> Goggles	\$

# COURSE MOUNTAINEERING EQUIPMENT LIST



*Self-sufficient Alaska Range mountaineering courses require a lot of equipment to deal with the extreme cold, crevassed glaciers, and icy slopes. Every item of gear has a specific need and is carefully chosen. Often, one piece of gear needs to layer seamlessly with another. Having the right equipment in combination helps assure the success of an expedition. Lucky for us, we are able to have complete control over what gear we decide to bring!*

*AMS has all the equipment on this list in ample supply, available for you in Talkeetna. There is no need to reserve anything in advance. We encourage you to bring what you have and rent or purchase the remainder at AMS during your initial equipment check. AMS equipment is practical, and serves our needs particularly well. (Bonus: You also get a discount!)*

## PERSONAL EQUIPMENT KEY

---

- \$ For purchase at AMS
- RNT For rent at AMS
- NC Available at no charge
- N/A Not available at AMS, but may be available in Talkeetna

*Rental prices are noted on the Personal Gear Checklist. Everything AMS rents, except for boots, is available for sale at the AMS Mountain Shop; all AMS students receive a 10% discount.*

*Please label your personal gear with your name or an identifying mark/piece of colored tape.*

This equipment list serves as a guideline for what is typically used on our courses. The exact amount of gear you choose to bring may vary. You'll spend the first day of your expedition with your instructors doing an equipment check, during which every item of gear will be evaluated. Extra gear that you won't use can be stored at AMS.

## FOOTWEAR

---

*Wool or synthetic expedition-weight socks, 3 pairs (\$):* We recommend that you wear one thick sock or one thick and one liner sock. AMS sells Farm to Feet socks.

*Double mountaineering boots, 1 pair (RNT):* Plastic shell with removable liner. These should fit comfortably with the sock combination and have plenty of wiggle room in the toe. Heel should not lift more than 1/2 inch when walking. Kick the toe of the boot against a suitable hard object and your toes should not hit the end of the boot until the third swing. Single boots are not suitable for multi-day winter camping, because you cannot remove the liner to dry out and keep

warm at night. It is common to wear a half size or more above your normal shoe size to accommodate the socks. AMS rents Scarpa Inverno.

*Gaiters, 1 pair (RNT/\$):* Since they keep snow out of your boots, they need to be large enough to fit around double plastic boots. Shell pants with internal gaiters are okay. AMS recommends: Outdoor Research Crocodiles.

*Insulated camp booties, 1 pair (RNT):* Synthetic-filled camp booties with foam foot bed, for use around camp and while sleeping. AMS recommends: AMS Fleece Bootie or Forty Below Camp Bootie.

*Rock climbing shoes, 1 pair (NC):* Fit to socks, used on most warm-temperature courses.

## UPPER-BODY CLOTHING

---

For coursework, you will need four insulation layers plus a shell jacket.

*(Women) Lightweight sports bra, 1 (\$):* 100% quick-drying synthetic material. AMS sells Patagonia Sport Tops.



*Base layer/lightweight, 1 (\$):* Lightweight polypropylene, capilene, or wool top. AMS sells a variety of Patagonia base layers.

*Base layer/midweight, 1 (\$):* Medium-weight polypropylene, capilene, or wool top. This should layer over your lightweight top. AMS sells a variety of Patagonia base layers.

*Insulation layer, 1 (RNT/\$):* Heavyweight top that fits over the first two layers easily. AMS rents Patagonia fleece sweaters and sells Patagonia R2 Jacket or Patagonia Hooded Micro Puff Jacket or Nano Puff Pullover.

*Hard shell jacket, 1 (RNT/\$):* Waterproof/breathable hard shell and roomy enough to fit over insulation layers. AMS rents and sells Patagonia hard- and soft-shell jackets.

*Insulated synthetic parka 1 (RNT/\$):* Large, roomy down or synthetic parka with hood. This should fit comfortably over all other layers. AMS rents and sells Patagonia Das Parka.

---

#### LOWER-BODY CLOTHING

For coursework, you will need two insulation layers plus shell pants.

*Base layer underwear, 2-3 pairs (\$):* Capilene or silk underwear, no cotton. AMS sells Patagonia Active Briefs.

*Base layer/lightweight, 1 (\$):* One light- or midweight pair of capilene or wool. AMS sells Patagonia base layers.

*Soft shell pants, 1 (\$):* An optional outer layer. Many people find these more comfortable to wear in favorable conditions. AMS sells Patagonia and Black Diamond soft shell pants.

*Shell pants, 1 (RNT/\$):* Waterproof/breathable fabric. Roomy enough to fit over layers and underneath your insulated overpants. Full- or partial-length side zippers to fit over plastic boots. AMS rents and sells Patagonia Rain Shadow Pants and sells Patagonia Stretch Ascent Pants.

*Insulated overpants, 1 (RNT/\$):* Synthetic-filled shell overpants with full side zips. Fleece pants are okay. AMS rents and sells Mountain Hardwear Compressor Pant.

---

#### HEAD/FACE/EYES

*Sun Hat, 1 (\$):* A baseball hat or similar with good coverage. AMS Sells tech-fabric and cotton baseball hats and visors and Patagonia sun hats.

*Bandana/buff, 1 (\$):* Primarily used to keep the sun off your neck and face while traveling, it also adds some warmth in cold conditions. AMS sells Patagonia Sun Masks.

*Warm hat, 1-2 (\$):* A fleece or wool winter hat. AMS sells a variety from Patagonia, Mountain Hardwear, and Black Diamond.

*Glacier glasses, 1 pair (\$):* Should block 100% UV and should have a VLT (Visual Light Transmission) rating of 4–12%, meaning they have dark lenses. If you wear prescription lenses, bring your own prescription sunglasses or dark lens ski goggles to fit over your glasses. AMS sells Julbo sunglasses.

*Sunglasses case, 1 (\$):* Storage protection for glacier glasses.

---

#### HANDS

*Medium-weight liner gloves, 1-2 (\$):* These gloves are great for traveling on the glacier and for tent time after. AMS sells Black Diamond liner gloves.

*Insulated ski gloves, 1 (\$):* When conditions get colder and we are working in the snow, ski gloves are essential. AMS sells a variety of Black Diamond ski gloves.

*Insulated mittens, 1 (RNT/\$):* These are essential for the colder earlier season trips. AMS sells Mountain Hardwear Absolute Zero Mitts

---

#### SLEEPING EQUIPMENT

*Sleeping bag, 1 (RNT):* Rated to -15°F with approximately 4-5 pounds of synthetic insulation. Should have a hood and collar that can be drawn close to your neck. Roomy enough to include you, two water bottles, and your liner boots. AMS rents: Mountain Hardwear Lamina -15.

*Sleeping bag compression stuff sack, 1 (RNT):* Compresses sleeping bag in order to fit in pack.

*Full-length inflatable sleeping pad, 1 (\$):* AMS sells Thermarest inflatable pads.

*Full-length closed-cell foam pad, 1 (RNT/\$):* AMS rents and sells Ridgerest closed-cell foam pads. The inflatable and closed-cell pads are used in combination for your sleeping system.

---

#### BACKPACK / STORAGE

*Internal frame pack, 1 (RNT/\$):* The main compartment should be approximately 5,000 cubic inches (80-90 liters). It should have attachment points for sleeping pads, ice axe, and crampons. AMS rents and sells Mountain Hardwear.

*Small stuff sack, 2 (RNT/\$):* For organizing personal gear/toiletries and clothing. AMS sells Granite Gear Air Bags

*Lunch stuff sack, 2 (RNT):* Storage for all your lunch food for the entire trip. Medium sized, around 10 Liters

*Tent stuff sack, 1 (RNT/\$):* Lightweight, 16"x 24" for storing extra clothing in your tent.

*Garbage bags, 3 (\$):* Large trash bags for lining the inside of sleeping bag, clothing stuff sacks, and for caching gear.

*Sled duffel, 1 (NC):* A large, lightweight duffel bag with full zipper, approximately 40" long and 16" in diameter. AMS provides a custom-made duffel that is designed specifically for our sleds.

#### TRAVEL EQUIPMENT

---

*Snowshoes, 1 pair (RNT/\$):* The lacing or buckles should be big enough to accommodate plastic double boots. Regular size (25) for body weights under 200 lbs. Size large (30) if you weigh over 200 lbs. AMS rents and sells MSR Lightning Ascent.

*Avalanche transceiver, 1 (NC):* Transmits and receives on 457 kHz. Bring a set of new batteries. AMS provides and sells Tracker II beacons.

*Avalanche probe, 1 (NC):* AMS provides and sells Black Diamond 320cm guide probes.

*Avalanche shovel, 1 (NC):* AMS provides and sells Voile telescoping avalanche shovels.

*Compass, 1 (NC/\$):* Basic baseplate map compass with declination scale.

#### SUN PROTECTION

---

*Lip balm, 1 (\$):* Should have sun protection rating. AMS sells several varieties.

*Sunscreen, 1 2-oz. tube or equivalent (\$):* SPF 20 or greater. Zinc oxide is recommended for people with a history of sunburn. AMS sells several varieties.

#### TOILETRIES

---

*Toilet paper, 1 roll, single-ply (\$):* Put in a Ziploc bag.

*Hand disinfectant, 1 (\$):* Travel-size bottle of alcohol-based hand cleaner; goes in the Ziploc with the TP.

*Handi Wipes, 6-12 (\$):* Individually wrapped, travel-sized wipes are easily thawed in your pocket.

*Travel sized toothpaste, 1 (\$):* AMS sells common brands of small tubes.

*Travel toothbrush, 1 (\$):* AMS sells a 2-piece toothbrush, where the handle becomes the cover.

*(Women) Sanitary supplies (\$):* Bring a supply of tampons or your preferred backcountry method.

*Pee bottle, 1 (\$):* We use pee bottles in conjunction with a Clean Mountain Can for solid waste. AMS sells a variety.

#### CLIMBING EQUIPMENT

---

*Helmet, 1 (RNT):* Designed specifically for rock climbing. AMS provides Petzl and Black Diamond climbing helmets.

*Crampons, 1 pair (NC):* Fully adjustable 12-point crampons, must fit securely and not be prone to rolling or popping off when side-hilling. AMS rents Black Diamond Contact Strap crampons.

*Crampon case, 1 (NC):* Storage for crampons to keep them from harming other equipment.

*Ice axe, 1 (RNT/\$):* 55-70 cm long general mountaineering ice axe suitable for self-arrest and snow climbing. AMS rents and sells Black Diamond axes.

*Seat harness, 1 (RNT/\$):* Drop-leg loop style that fits snugly around your waist. AMS rents and sells Black Diamond Alpine Bod.

*Ascender w/sling, 1 (NC/\$):* Mechanical climbing ascender with handle grip. Sling should be long enough to attach to waist with arm extended. AMS provides and sells Petzl Ascension.

*Carabiners, 10 (RNT/\$):* Oval or D-shaped, regular gate or wire gate. Rated for 5,000 pounds (18kN). AMS sells Black Diamond OvalWire and Oval Carabiner.

*Locking carabiners, 2 (RNT/\$):* Full-size screw gate carabiner (pear shape) rated for 5,000 lbs (18kN). AMS sells BD RockLock and VaporLock Screwgate Locking carabiners.

*Glacier rig (NC/\$) consisting of 6 mm perlon cord and 1-inch tubular webbing.* AMS provides pre-cut, color-coded webbing and perlon for crevasse rescue. All participants have the same system for ease of safety checks. Items include: chest harness, safety prusik, hauling prusik, foot prusik, sled haul, and pack leash. You have the option to purchase or borrow this for your course. AMS provides and sells Sterling.

#### EATING & DRINKING

---

*Cup/mug, 1 (\$):* LDPE or insulated mug with top. 12-20 oz. AMS sells 20-oz AMS insulated mug with cap and Fairshare.

*Bowl with lid, 1 (\$):* Sturdy in cold temps. It should have a lid to keep things clean and allows spoon to be stored inside during travel. AMS sells Fairshare and lidded HDPE containers.

*Spoon, 1 (\$):* Spoons work well as the sole utensil. AMS provides and sells Lexan spoons.

*Water bottles, 2 (\$):* All water is derived from melting snow. Wide-mouth, single-quart is the easiest to fill and drink out of. Everyone needs a minimum of 2 quarts/liters of drinking water available during the day. We do NOT recommend metal water bottles; BPA-free options are recommended. AMS sells AMS HDPE Nalgene water bottles.

*Water bottle insulators, 2 (RNT/\$):* Insulated covers for your water bottles. These effectively turn a water bottle into a lightweight thermos. Water bottles without insulators can freeze while traveling, even within packs. AMS rents and sells Granite Gear insulators.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

---

*Pocket knife, 1 (\$):* For food prep, small repairs, or cutting tape/moleskin. AMS sells multi-tools.

*Watch, 1 (\$):* With an alarm. Altimeter feature is a bonus. AMS sells (inexpensive) watches with an alarm, such as the water-resistant Casio Classic.

*Lighter, 1 (\$):* For lighting kitchen stoves. AMS sells BIC.

*Earplugs, 1 pair (\$):* For windy nights or a snoring tent partner. AMS sells basic soft rubber earplugs.

*Headlamp, 1 (\$):* Only needed for courses in March or April. Bring new batteries. AMS sells Petzl.

*Notebook and pencil, 1 each (\$)* AMS sells Rite-in-the-Rain notebooks and mechanical pencils.

#### MEDICAL

---

The course carries a drug kit, but since instructors are not authorized to administer medications beyond emergency situations, we ask that you bring medications you regularly use, and the following:

*Ibuprofen, 20 tablets (N/A)*

*Acetaminophen (Tylenol), 20 tablets (N/A)*

*Blister kit, 1 (\$):* When stretched out on a rope team all day it's best to have your own blister care. Your instructors will also be carrying supplies.

#### OPTIONAL ITEMS

---

These items are not mandatory, but some may be nice depending on the season:

*Trail food, 1 lb/0.5 kg (N/A):* Your favorite specific snacks or energy bars. AMS provides all course food, including a variety of trail mixes, candy bars, crackers, cheese, and salami.

*Coffee:* Instant coffee packets such as Starbucks Via are great for coffee drinkers. AMS provides teas, hot chocolate, and instant cold drink mixes. AMS sells Starbucks Via.

*Camera, 1 (\$):* Photographers should leave their SLRs and take their point-and-shoots. The camera should fit in a chest pocket and have a slim case, or none at all. Bring three sets of batteries, four if you shoot video. Bring two memory cards in case one malfunctions.

*Nose guard, 1 (\$):* Recommended to reduce sun exposure, attaches to glacier glasses. AMS sells Beak-o.

*(Women) Pee funnel, 1 (\$):* A redirection urinary device that can be useful during stormy weather. Practice before field use. AMS sells Go-Girl and Freshette.

*Neoprene Gloves, 1 (RNT)* Good for July courses when there is a chance of rain. Keeps hands warm when wet.

*Half-length pad, 1 (RNT):* Half-length foam pad or Crazy Creek chair used as a seat in your snow kitchen.

*Overboots, 1 pair (RNT/\$):* While not necessary for their intended purpose of keeping your toes warm at 20,000 ft, overboots are nice for keeping camp booties dry while in camp.

*Goggles, 1 pair (\$):* Good quality, double lens, 100% UV protection. Ski goggles provide warmth and visibility in blowing snow. AMS sells Julbo and Bolle.

#### GROUP EQUIPMENT—AMS PROVIDES

---

AMS provides all group equipment needed for courses to achieve their activity goals.

#### CAMPING EQUIPMENT

*4-season tent:* Mountain Hardwear Trango tents rigged with snow anchors. 2 people per 3-person tent, or 3 people per 4-person tent.

*Kitchen shelter:* 1. Each tent group has their own kitchen shelter. Black Diamond Mega-Light kitchen shelter with extendable pole. This tent, which has no floor, is also used as a lightweight bivy shelter.

Classroom/meeting shelter: 1. Hilleberg 4-person tent fly.

*Fuel:* 8-10 oz per person per day. AMS uses Coleman white gas.

*Snow shovels:* 1 per person. AMS provides Voile Tele-Pro snow shovels.

*Snow saw:* 2 per tent. AMS has designed and produced the ultimate snow saw for cutting many blocks.

*Clean Mountain Can (CMC):* 1-2. AMS supports the cleanest approach to backcountry travel. Solid human waste is flown out of the mountains.

*CMC bag:* 1-2. Custom made bag to transport CMCs.

*Stoves:* 3 per kitchen. MSR Whisperlight International stoves with stove screens and stove boards. 2 stoves together for melting snow and a third stove for cooking. AMS designs stove boards for cooking on snow to be light and easily packed.

*Emergency stove:* 1. MSR Reactor isobutane stove.

*Cooking pots:* 2 per kitchen. Large capacity/6–8 quart for melting snow and smaller/4–6 quart for cooking.

*Deep-dish frying pan:* 1. Anyone who has done a NOLS course will appreciate the value of the Fry-Bake. Those who are unfamiliar have a treat in store!

*Utensils:* 3 per kitchen. Kitchen spoon, metal spatula, heavy-duty pot grips.

*Pot pads:* 2 per kitchen. Thin wooden pot pads for insulating the bottom of pots from contact with snow.

*Scrubby:* 1 per kitchen. MSR Alpine Dish Scraper.

*Dish soap:* 1 per kitchen. Mild, biodegradable dish soap.

*Sump screen:* 1 per kitchen. Screens gray water for food particles to minimize environmental impact in the kitchen.

*Dipper cups:* 2 per kitchen. Used for transferring water and hot soup.

*Pot bag:* 1 per kitchen. Custom made bags to carry pot/pan setup.

*Kitchen bag:* 1 per kitchen. Custom-made bag to bomb-proof kitchen at night or when not in camp.

*Snow bag:* 1 per kitchen. Custom-made tall, high-volume stuff sack for containing snow used for making water.

*Food rations:* 2 lbs (1 kg) per person per day. Your instructors will pack all the breakfast and dinner food prior to the course starting date. We take into account anyone who has expressed dietary needs and pack accordingly. Participants pack their own lunches, hot and cold drinks at

AMS on the starting date; AMS provides a wide variety of trail foods, teas, cold drink mixes and cocoa, with AMS staff guidance, this packing method allows the highest amount of personal preference.

#### TRAVEL EQUIPMENT

*Sleds:* 1 per person. AMS uses custom-made Siglin UHMW pulks that are lightweight, streamlined, and track well.

*Wands:* 70 per course. AMS uses 3-foot, no-dye bamboo garden stakes with personalized flagging for route-finding.

*Maps:* 1 set per tent group. AMS uses CalTopo for mapping software and a large format laser printer with 11" x 17" waterproof paper to print maps for all areas of operation.

*Compass:* 1 per map set. Simple compass with base plate for orienting map and shooting a bearing.

*GPS:* 1. GPS is used in conjunction with map and compass for tracking and navigating with waypoints.

*Snow study:* 1. Instructors bring a snow study kit to complement the avalanche curriculum.

#### REPAIR KITS

*Stove repair:* 1. An assortment of parts for MSR Whisperlight stoves, including a complete pump and fuel bottle.

*General repair:* 1. Materials and tools to fix tents, snowshoes, crampons, boots, and packs.

*Spare sunglasses:* 1.

#### CLIMBING EQUIPMENT

*Glacier travel ropes:* 1 per group of 4. Sterling Ropes 10mm Safety Pro 60-m semi-static ropes.

*Lead climber rope:* 1. Sterling Ropes 9mm Fusion Nano DryXP 60- m dynamic rope.

*Snow protection:* 1 per person. 3- and 4-ft MSR snow pickets and flukes.

*Ice protection:* 6-8. Black Diamond Express ice screws, 19 and 22 cm with v-threaders.

*Rock protection:* 1 alpine rack. Black Diamond stoppers, camalot, and pitons.

*Ice tools:* 2-6 pairs. Black Diamond technical ice-climbing tools.

*Runners and quickdraws:* 10. Sewn webbing and flexible links for lead climbing and anchor building.

*Chain reactor:* 1 per person. Made by Sterling Ropes. Used in AMS's standard setup for rappelling with a pack.



# COURSE TRAVEL AND LOGISTICS

*Your course begins in Talkeetna, a small, historic town 120 miles north of Anchorage and 14 miles off the George Parks Highway (Alaska Route 3). Perhaps best known for its proximity to Denali, Talkeetna possesses a rich history of mountaineering and of the bush pilots who fly climbers into the Alaska Range. The town of 1000+ residents is located at the confluence of the Susitna, Chulitna, and Talkeetna rivers, making fishing for salmon and rainbow trout a popular local activity. Downtown Talkeetna is a historic district full of character; Main Street is lined with shops, art galleries, and pubs.*

## ARRIVAL / FIRST DAY

---

We recommend arriving in Talkeetna one day before your course begins. We will meet at **8:00 a.m.** at AMS on the first day of your course. Please arrive on time; there is a lot to do the first day. The morning will be spent with an AMS orientation, checking and issuing your equipment. Lunch is provided at AMS. After lunch the group will visit the National Park Service ranger station to pay park entrance fees (\$15), return to AMS to practice fixed line ascension, change into mountain clothes, pack the van and go to the air taxi to fly into the mountains. If the weather is not flyable, classes will be held at AMS. On rare occasions, stormy weather persists in the Alaska Range and courses either fly or drive into the Chugach Range or Talkeetna Mountains. Please wait until the first day of your course to check gear with your instructors. Instructors are busy prior to the starting day briefing, organizing food, and packing group equipment. Feel free to contact AMS with questions in the months prior to your course.

## DEPARTURE / LAST DAY

---

We recommend that you allow two (2) days on the return end of your travel plans, or purchase flexible departure date airline tickets, in the event that a storm keeps your course on the glacier for longer than expected. We'll do our best to ensure that your course ends on schedule, and most do. However, we cannot guarantee flyable weather; remember that the bush planes can only fly when the weather is suitable. We strongly suggest you plan for spending the night in Talkeetna upon your return from the course: partly so you can enjoy a night out for dinner with your course mates but also because transportation schedules may require that you catch your shuttle to Anchorage the following day. Note, however, that it is not necessary to purchase round-trip shuttle tickets; many climbers prefer to wait and arrange their shuttle when they have returned from their course. Contact AMS if you have further questions about logistics.

## LOGISTICS: GETTING TO TALKEETNA

---

Most participants fly into Anchorage International Airport. Be sure to research your shuttle or train options before booking your flight to Anchorage to ensure that you'll be able to arrive on time. To get from Anchorage to Talkeetna you must travel by highway, railroad, or air. Highway travel time is about 3 hours. Van shuttles offer daily service between Anchorage and Talkeetna and pick up at many locations in Anchorage, some at the airport. Prices are generally around \$100 one way and discounts are given for round-trip bookings or with groups of people. If you choose to take the train or motor coach, please let AMS know in advance so we can arrange to meet you upon arrival and transfer you to your lodging. Below are transportation options with daily schedules from mid-May to mid-September.

Alaska Railroad	800-544-0552	<a href="http://www.alaskarailroad.com">www.alaskarailroad.com</a>	Daily train to/from Talkeetna from Anchorage and Fairbanks
Park Connection Motor Coach	800-208-0200	<a href="http://www.alaskacoach.com">www.alaskacoach.com</a>	Daily coach to/from Anchorage / Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge

*Custom shuttles March to September, your best option for early season:*

Talkeetna Taxi	907-355-8294	www.talkeetnataxi.com	Locally owned and operated
Denali Overland	907-733-2384	www.denalioverland.com	Locally owned and operated
Go Purple	907-644-8098	www.gopurpleshuttle.com	Popular with reasonable fares

## ANCHORAGE LODGING

Nestled against the Chugach Mountains, Anchorage is Alaska's largest city, with a population of approximately 300,000. Taxi rides from the airport to downtown are approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Some hotels offer free airport shuttle service. An Internet search will yield many good options with a wide price range. These options below are popular:

Coast International Inn	907-243-2233	www.coasthotels.com	Comfortable rooms near airport; shuttle
Comfort Inn Ship Creek	877-424-6423	www.comfortinn.com	Downtown, next to Alaska Railroad Depot, airport shuttle
Hotel Captain Cook	800-843-1950	www.captaincook.com	Downtown Anchorage, five star, fine dining
Hampton Inn	866-975-6553	www.reservationcounter.com	Mid-town hotel, near airport, complimentary airport shuttle
Duke's 8th Ave Hotel	907-274-6213	www.dukesalaskahotel.com	Located in the heart of Anchorage
Copper Whale Inn	907-258-7999	www.copperwhale.com	Downtown Anchorage, near Cook Inlet

## TALKEETNA LODGING

You are welcome to stay, free of charge, at the AMS campground before or after your course. You must provide your own tent; there is no running water available after hours (showers available for a small fee at the Talkeetna Roadhouse). We recommend any of the below lodgings (many offer a 10% discount to AMS participants); most are within walking distance of downtown. We can pick you and your gear up on the day before your course begins; but make sure to check in with us first to arrange pick up. Let us know where you plan to stay on the Participant Travel form in your course paperwork.

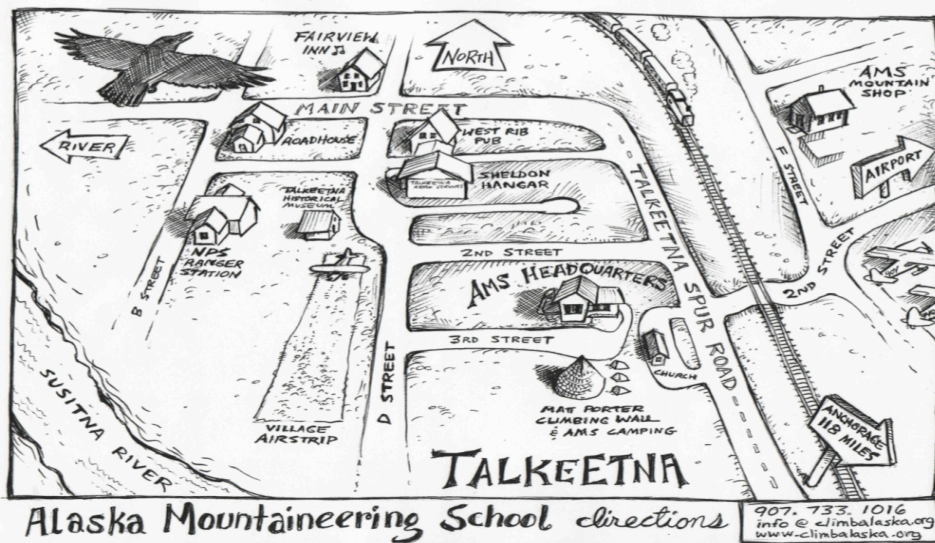
Northern Guest House	907-715-4868	www.northernguesthouse.com	Close to AMS; B&B style; shared kitchen
Chinook Wind Cabins	800-643-1899	www.chinookwindcabins.com	Cabins and rooms, some with kitchens, next to AMS
Swiss Alaska Inn	907-733-2424	www.swissalaska.com	Climber friendly motel and restaurant, walk to town
Talkeetna Roadhouse	907-733-1351	www.talkeetnaroadhouse.com	AMS discount, rooms and bunks, famous breakfasts!
Latitude 62 Motel	907-733-2262	www.latitude62.com	Rooms, suite; full service restaurant
Talkeetna Hideaway	907-232-7944	www.talkeetnahideaway.com	Cabins and rooms, comfortable and affordable, short walk to town

Denali Fireside	877-345-2226	www.denalifireside.com	Cabins/suites with kitchenettes/baths, rustic chic
Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge	877-777-4067	www.talkeetnalodge.com	Luxury hotel, 3/4 mile from downtown and AMS

### MAP OF TALKEETNA

Alaska Mountaineering School headquarters is located at 13765 East Third Street (at the end of the street on the left), east of the village airstrip. Directions in Talkeetna: From Main Street, go south on D Street and turn left onto Third Street. AMS is the last building on the left.

If you are driving, you may leave your car at AMS during your course. Please refer to our map of Talkeetna



### TRAVEL INSURANCE

AMS recommends that you purchase travel and tuition/trip cancellation insurance immediately after paying your deposit. This special insurance may cover costs if you are unable to join the course due to a personal emergency or personal or family medical reasons, or if a course is canceled for reasons beyond our control. AMS is not responsible for costs associated with canceled enrollment, courses that cancel for reasons beyond our control, or evacuations from courses. We recommend that our international climbers purchase trip cancellation insurance as well as short-term medical coverage.

Insure My Trip		www.insuremytrip.com	Database of coverage from many companies
TravelGuard	800-826-1300	www.travelguard.com www.travelguardworldwide.com	"Adventure Sports Coverage" for mountaineering Unavailable for WA and international residents
American Alpine Club	303-384-0110	www.americanalpineclub.org	"Global Rescue Service" upgrade available
British Mountaineering Council	+44 (0) 161 445 6111	www.thebmc.co.uk/modules/insurance	"Expedition Travel" insurance
Ripcord	415-481-0600	www.ripcordrescuetravelinsurance.com	Comprehensive Travel Insurance for all Mountaineering Programs. Ask for Harbor Travel Insurance

# MOUNTAINEERING COURSE READING LIST



The following list of recommended reading materials will enhance your experience at AMS. Books with \*\*\* are required pre-course reading for the Advanced and Mountain Guides courses. Many of these books are available from Alaska Geographic, [alaskageographic.org](http://alaskageographic.org). Books in bold and marked with \*\* are available for purchase from AMS.

## HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

---

\*\*\* *Snow Sense: A Guide to Evaluating Snow Avalanche Hazard* by Jill Fredston & Doug Fesler (Alaska Mountain Safety Center, 2004, latest edition)

\*\*\* ***Glacier Mountaineering: An Illustrated Guide to Glacier Travel and Crevasse Rescue*** by Andy Tyson & Mike Clelland (Climbing Magazine, 2004) \*\*

*Allen and Mike's Really Cool Backcountry Ski Book* by Allen O'Bannon & Mike Clelland (Chockstone Press, 1996)

*NOLS Wilderness Mountaineering* by Phil Powers (Stackpole Books, latest edition)

*Glacier Travel and Crevasse Rescue* by Andy Selters (The Mountaineers, 1990)

*Hypothermia, Frostbite, and Other Cold Injuries: Prevention, Survival, Rescue, and Treatment* by G. Giesbrecht, J. Wilkerson, B. Cameron, & J. Hayward (The Mountaineers, 1986, latest edition)

## RECOMMENDED

---

*Mount McKinley, Icy Crown of North America* by Fred Beckey (The Mountaineers, 1993, 1999)

*The Geology of Denali National Park* by Michael Collier (Alaska Natural History Association, 1989)

***Denali's West Buttress: A Climbers Guide*** by Colby Coombs (The Mountaineers, 1997) \*\*

*Minus 148* by Art Davidson (Cloudcap, 1969, 1986)

*Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills* by the Mountaineers (Mountaineers Books, latest edition)

*Outdoor Leadership* by John Graham (The Mountaineers, 1997)

*Mountain Sickness: Prevention, Recognition and Treatment* by Peter Hackett (American Alpine Club Press, latest edition)

*Glaciers* by Michael Hambrey & Jurg Alean (Cambridge University Press, 1992, 2004)

*Going Higher: Oxygen, Man, and Mountains* by Charles Houston MD (The Mountaineers, 1998, 2005, latest edition)

*The Avalanche Handbook* by David McClung & Peter Schaerer (Mountaineers Books, 1993, 2006)

*Medicine for Mountaineering* by The Mountaineers (Mountaineers Books, latest edition)

*Mt. McKinley, The Pioneer Climbs* by Terris Moore (Mountaineers Books, 1967, 1981, 1988, 1993, 2000)

*NOLS Cookery* by Claudia Pearson (Stackpole Books, 1991, 2004)

*Knots & Ropes for Climbers* by Duane Raleigh & Mike Clelland (Stackpole Books, 1998)

*Mt. McKinley, Climbers Handbook* by Glenn Randall (Chockstone Press, 1992)

*The Long Walk* by Slavomir Rawicz (The Lyons Press, 1956, 1984, 1997, 2006)

*Denali, A Literary Anthology* by Bill Sherwonit (Mountaineers Books, 2000)

*The Ascent of Denali* by Hudson Stuck (Wolfe Publishing Co. Inc., 1988)

*Medicine For The Backcountry* by Buck Tilton & Frank Hubbell (ICS Books, Inc., 1995)

*Extreme Alpinism* by Mark Twight & Don Graydon (The Mountaineers, 1999)

*Mount McKinley: The West Buttress* by Bradford Washburn (American Alpine Club Journal, 1952)

*Mount McKinley, The Conquest of Denali* by Bradford Washburn & David Roberts (Harry N. Abrahams, Inc, 1991)

*High Alaska: A Historical Guide to Denali, Mt. Foraker, and Mt. Hunter* by Jonathan Waterman (AAC Press, 1988)

*Surviving Denali: A Study of Accidents on Mount McKinley: 1903-1990* by Jonathan Waterman (AAC Press)

*Alaska, A Climbing Guide* by Mike Wood & Colby Coombs (Mountaineers Books, 2001)