

6-DAY MOUNTAINEERING COURSE

Alaska Mountaineering School promotes excellence in responsible mountaineering and wilderness travel through educating and guiding others. AMS programs follow a progression that prioritizes safety, teamwork, skill-building, respecting wilderness, and having fun. Our hands-on, you-do-it approach leads to successful outcomes. We want you to be able to repeat the skills you learned without supervision.



COURSE DESCRIPTION

The AMS 6-Day Mountaineering Course is an abbreviated version of our 12-day course. Like the 12-day course, it is designed for anyone who wishes to travel and climb on a multi-day expedition in a glaciated mountain range. This course models a Denali expedition by utilizing fixed-wing aircraft to land on a glacier. This is not a base camping course, but one that moves to at least one new location. 5 full days in the field will be busy if we are to build a foundation of essential mountaineering skills. Throughout the course, participants learn by doing, gaining confidence to camp and travel on a glacier, and climb mountains in a remote environment.

SPECIFICATIONS

Experience level: No previous outdoor or climbing experience required.

Fitness: You need to be fit, not a competitive athlete, but good stamina for all-day outings sometimes carrying 35-40 lbs.

Deposit: \$500, due upon registration

Course balance due: 60 days prior to the starting date

Group limit: 9 students, 3 instructors

Tuition includes: Professional mountaineering instructors, roundtrip glacier flight; all food during your course; all group camping equipment such as tents and stoves and shovels; all group climbing equipment such as ropes and anchors; all emergency first aid, communication, and repair equipment.

You are responsible for: Transportation to and from Talkeetna, lodging before and after the course, entrance fees to Denali National Park, travelers cancellation insurance, personal equipment and clothing, and AMS equipment rentals.

FEATURES

- 1:3 instructor student ratio as the gold standard. Crevasse self-rescue class in AMS before departing.

- A carefully planned menu and complete kitchen for each cook group.
- Mountain Hardwear Trango tents, Black Diamond kitchen shelters, and Hilleberg classroom.

EXPEDITION STYLE & REMOTENESS

AMS mountaineering courses are self-reliant expeditions that travel in a remote mountain range in Alaska. Throughout the course, students learn to live in a glaciated environment, prepare their own meals, care for themselves, move camp, and climb peaks. The course format emphasizes hands-on learning and the application of new skills in a variety of terrains. It also teaches self-reliance. If the weather is unflyable, evacuation to modern medical facilities can be difficult and may take up to several days. AMS courses model climbing and camping techniques that prepare students to pursue mountaineering in a glaciated mountain environment. As is common on mountaineering expeditions, students should expect to have mixed-gender sleeping tents for at least some of their course.

ENVIRONMENT & COURSE LOCATION

Mountaineering courses fly into Denali National Park and Preserve, home to America's greatest mountain range, the Alaska Range. The exact location depends on current weather conditions, but it is usually within the Kahiltna, Ruth, or Eldridge glaciers. AMS chooses not to go to the same place twice and for learning opportunities prefers a variety of outdoor classroom sites. Some of these areas were pioneered by AMS courses. Expect to be on a glacier for the duration of the course.

WILDERNESS APPRECIATION

AMS is based in Talkeetna in order to access the incredible wilderness of the Alaska Range. Anyone who spends days in these mountains will naturally achieve a wilderness experience. By role modeling the best practices for conserving these areas, AMS hopes to develop the wilderness conservationist in all of us. Thinking ahead and preparing, staying organized, bomb proofing our camps, and paying special attention to hygiene.

These Leave No Trace techniques make us a stronger expedition and more likely to achieve our climbing goals.

COURSE PROGRESSION

After a gear check, lunch packing, and our first climbing class, we fly into Denali National Park and Preserve and land on a remote glacier. We build our first camp, cook our first meal, and enjoy our first night out together. Climbing ground school, route finding on a glacier, and lowering each other into crevasses are the focus of the next couple of days. By the fourth day, we are ready to put our skills to work, pack up camp, and move to a new location. Students lead rope teams, build camp, and break into small cooking groups. Focus shifts to snow and ice climbing techniques and the belay methods used to protect ourselves. Avalanche awareness and snow study are followed by rescue and transceiver searches. Putting it all together, we climb a peak or two. The last day is an alpine start with student lead rope teams back to the landing zone for pickup. The AMS progression is a moderately steep learning curve at first, but through repetition, it becomes natural and easy to build on.

THE FIRST DAY

On the starting day of the course, students meet with instructors at 8:00 am at AMS. There will be muffins, coffee, tea, and juice. After an orientation, we divide into two groups for equipment check and lunch packing. Your instructor will go through all your equipment with you and ensure you are properly outfitted. Any items needed can be rented or purchased at this time. There is no need to reserve in advance. Please read the Equipment List for more information. You will also be packing your lunches in the AMS food room. We pack our lunches individually and all the food is provided. Please read the Lunch Packing sheet for more information. By mid-day, we serve a hearty lunch at AMS. After lunch, we dress in our field clothing, put on harnesses and helmets, and do our first climbing class: fixed line ascension. After class, we take care of last-minute items, store any gear we are not using, and head over to the Talkeetna airport. Our transportation to the glacier is on ski-equipped, fixed-wing airplanes like the DeHaviland Single-engine Turbine Otter. The 45-minute flight into the mountains is a spectacular highlight of the course. After arriving on the glacier, we take a few moments to enjoy the amazing setting before traveling a short distance and building our first camp. Once camp is built, we'll enjoy our first dinner and go to bed warm and dry.

UNFLYABLE WEATHER

Alaska's mountain weather is unpredictable and difficult to forecast. It can prevent flying into or out of the mountains on time. If your course is unable to fly, we are able to stay busy teaching classes at AMS and you will be given the option to

camp here. Although rare, persistent stormy weather at the beginning of a course could result in a location change to the Talkeetna or Chugach Mountains. During a course, expect to see a wide range of weather. It is not unusual to have snow and rain during the same course. Courses can also be weathered in the mountains and unable to fly out. We avoid running low on rations by flying in with a week of extra food and fuel. 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 also refer to the Travel and Logistics sheet.

LEADERSHIP & TEAMWORK

Successful expeditions are properly equipped and have the necessary technical skills, but most importantly they practice good leadership and learn to work together to achieve group goals. At AMS, developing leadership and teamwork starts with gaining experience and developing good judgment. We teach leadership which emphasizes the importance of taking care of our basic needs like hydration and nutrition and staying warm in order to make us stronger and more durable team members. How to make teamwork work is essential on any multi-day expedition and an important discussion built on throughout your course.

INSTRUCTORS

AMS instructors all started as climbers who fell in love with teaching. Like good teachers, they are compassionate about their responsibility for laying a strong foundation for their students. They are attracted to AMS because as a school, we prioritize education over guiding. Our format and curriculum can only be taught by climbers who are well-rounded in many aspects of the outdoors. AMS instructors know how to cook real food, but more importantly, they know how to teach you the fine art of one-burner cuisine. They work at AMS because they can teach navigation and glaciology as well as ice climbing and glacier travel. Certifications are required in emergency medicine, avalanche, Leave No Trace, and food handlers. All instructors must go through formal training prior to arriving at AMS.

FOOD

What to eat and how to cook it is vital to the success of any multi-day backcountry expedition. Just as important as tying your knots, having a good kitchen set up with the right food will make or break an expedition. AMS is eager to share with you its favorite recipes, rations, and ultimate kitchen by providing all of it for your course. You will learn how to prepare tasty, nutritious, and hearty meals. We know that looking forward to breakfast and knowing just what to do is a good way to start each day. Just as looking forward to dinner helps us push to the finish line. AMS' ration plan can accommodate vegetarians and other dietary needs pretty well.

We have a section of our food packing room devoted to gluten-free, dairy-free, and wheat-free products as well as others. Please contact AMS so we can make sure we can accommodate your dietary needs.

REFERENCES

Alaska Mountaineering School is a small, family-run operation that cares deeply about meeting the high standards it sets. Based entirely in Talkeetna, Alaska, we are focused on the mountains in our backyard, the Alaska Range. Please research AMS and tell us what you find. Ask the other companies that pop up who they would recommend if you couldn't go with them. Most will be comfortable recommending 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 the hazards of traveling and camping in a glaciated mountain environment
- Recognize and prevent cold injuries
- Display knowledge of personal limitations and the judgment to stay within them

Leadership and Teamwork

Students are exposed to different methods of outdoor leadership, teamwork, and expedition behavior. Each graduate is expected to:

- Display understanding of instructors' decision-making processes through discussion and questioning
- Demonstrate good expedition behavior with a positive attitude and desire to achieve group goals
- Effectively communicate ideas and concerns with individuals and within the group
- Use good judgment and attention to detail to participate fully in a safe, environmentally sound expedition

Environmental Ethics

An important part of every AMS course is a wilderness experience and learning Leave No Trace skills. Each graduate is expected to:

- Practice minimum-impact camping and traveling skills appropriate to a glaciated environment

Winter Camping

AMS courses teach camping skills that protect the user and the environment:

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

Mountaineering Skills

Learning the skills to become a safe and competent climber is the primary goal of AMS mountaineering courses. Each graduate is expected to:

- Master basic knots and 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
- Set up 3 and 4 person rope teams with sleds for glacier travel
- Set up a Z-pulley hauling system and ascend a fixed line
- Demonstrate efficient and safe glacier travel, route-finding techniques, and navigation skills
- Demonstrate snow climbing techniques and the use of crampons
- Recognize and avoid avalanche terrain
- Establish a skill base to be a strong expedition member on mountaineering expeditions like Denali

DAY-TO-DAY ITINERARY

Our 6-day mountaineering course's day-to-day itinerary is designed to make sure you get the most out of an introduction to Alaska mountaineering. Your instructors teach wilderness, leadership, and technical climbing skills in a progression that helps to develop competent and self-reliant climbers. By course end, you will have learned to identify and manage hazards and increased your technical knowledge in all aspects of glacier travel and mountaineering. Note that at the end of each day in this itinerary, we debrief the current day and make fresh weather observations and analyses.

Briefing and Packing Days

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

Day 1

8:00 am: 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 pm: Lunch provided at AMS

1:00 pm: Dress for the field

1:30 pm: Fixed line ascension class

3:00 pm: Pack up, weigh everything for the flight

3:30 pm: Load van. Drive a short distance to the airport. Organize loads for flight.

4:00 pm: Fly onto the glacier. Travel a short distance and establish camp: probe and wand the perimeter, build walls, make sleeping platforms, set up a group kitchen, establish the bathroom.

6:00 pm: All group dinner

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

7:00 am: Group breakfast. Class: food ID and nutrition.

9:00 am–12:00 pm: Basic climbing skills: More knots, rope identification and care, rope handling and coiling, snow protection and anchor systems, and belaying.

1:00 pm–6:00 pm: Roping up for glacier travel, rope travel techniques, simple crevasse fall scenarios, transferring a load, snow climbing techniques, use of ice axe, self-arrest. Head out of camp for glacier travel. Evening discussion: Expedition behavior, intro to leadership.

Day 3

9:00 am–5:00 pm: Meet with daypacks ready for a full day away from camp. Students organize themselves into rope teams. Group heads to crevasse for self-rescue practice: the site is secured, and anchors are built for lowering and raising systems. Students lead rope teams in glacier travel along a known 30-degree snow slope. Snow climbing and crampon practice is followed by ice axe self-arrest practice. The site turns into a ground school for running protection and fixed lines. Evening discussion: Avalanche Awareness.

Day 4

Break camp down, pack up, and travel to a new location. Students lead the rope team and campsite selection processes.

Each tent has its own kitchen shelter. Evening discussion: Planning a peak ascent.

Day 5

All-day peak ascent with classes on route finding, running protection, belaying, snowpack stability. Evening discussion: Next steps for pursuing mountaineering.

Day 6

Early morning camp break down. Student-led rope teams head back to the airstrip. Fly back to Talkeetna. Clean up and de-issue gear, write evaluations, and finish logistics. Final farewell.

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 helps assure the success of an expedition.

AMS has all the equipment on this list available for you in Talkeetna. There is no need to reserve anything in advance. We encourage you to bring what you already have or can borrow and rent or purchase the remainder at AMS.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT KEY

- \$ For purchase at AMS
RNT For rent at AMS (prices are noted on the Personal Gear Checklist)
N/C Available at no charge
N/A Not available at AMS or in Talkeetna (should be obtained before arrival)

GEAR CHECK

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 a little. You'll spend the first day of your course 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

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.

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

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): Bring your rock shoes if you have them, otherwise you can use a pair from AMS.

UPPER BODY CLOTHING

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

(Women) Lightweight sports bra, 1 (N/A): 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.

Wind shell, 1 (\$): Lightweight wind shell that is 100% breathable, but not water proof. AMS sells Patagonia Houdini Jackets.

Hard shell jacket, 1 (RNT): Waterproof hard shell and roomy enough to fit over insulation layers. AMS rents Patagonia hard-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 Patagonia Das Parka.

LOWER BODY CLOTHING

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 Patagonia Rain Shadow Pants.

Insulated overpants, 1 (RNT): Synthetic-filled shell overpants with full side zips. Fleece pants are okay. AMS rents 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.

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, 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): When conditions are too cold for ski gloves. AMS rents 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 accommodate you, two water bottles, and your liner boots. AMS rents: Mountain Hardwear Lamina 0 degree and -20 depending on conditions.

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.

Pillow, 1 (\$): A pillow can be as simple as filling a stuff sack with extra clothing. For those who need more support, there are products such as Cascade Designs Airhead Pillow.

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 Mountain Hardwear.

Small stuff sack, 2 (\$): For organizing personal gear/toiletries and clothing. AMS sells Sealine waterproof stuff sacks.

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 (N/C): 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. Heal risers are optional. AMS rents MSR Lightning Ascent.

Ski poles, 1 pair (RNT): Poles need wrist loops and snow baskets.

Avalanche transceiver, 1 (N/C): Transmits and receives on 457 kHz. AMS provides BCA Tracker beacons.

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 (N/A): 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 (N/C): Designed specifically for rock climbing. AMS provides Petzl and Black Diamond climbing helmets.

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

Crampon case, 1 (N/C): Storage for crampons to keep them from harming other equipment.

Ice axe, 1 (N/C): 55-70 cm long general mountaineering ice axe suitable for self-arrest and snow climbing. AMS provides Black Diamond axes.

Seat harness, 1 (N/C): Drop-leg loop style that fits snugly around your waist. AMS provides Black Diamond Alpine Bod.

Ascender w/sling, 1 (N/C): Mechanical climbing ascender with handle grip. Sling should be long enough to attach to waist with arm extended. AMS provides Petzl Ascension.

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

Locking carabiners, 2 (\$): Full-size screw gate carabiner (pear shape) rated for 5,000 lbs (18kN). AMS sells Black Diamond Screwgate Locking carabiners.

Glacier rig (N/C) 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 a lid.

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 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

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 (\$): Band-aids, athletic tape, specialized 2nd Skin Blister pads.

OPTIONAL ITEMS

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.

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

Goggles: \$. Double lens, 100% UV protection. Goggles provide warmth and visibility in blowing snow. AMS has Julbo goggles.

GROUP EQUIPMENT - AMS PROVIDES

AMS provides the following 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.

ATC: 1 per person. Black Diamond friction device used for belaying.

SAFETY

Ground to air radio: 1 VHF radio to communicate to planes flying overhead.

FRS radios: 1 per instructor. Walkie-talkies for use in situations where the group splits up.

Satellite phone: 1 Iridium with extra battery and solar panel.

Medication kit: 1 per instructor. All AMS instructors are certified in Wilderness First Responder. Their training and AMS's Medical Protocols allow us to bring a standard backcountry medications kit that includes: Acetaminophen, Albuterol, Aspirin, Benadryl, Cavit, Colace, Epinephrine, Ibuprofen, Keflex, Pepcid, Zofran.

First aid kit: 1 per instructor. Contents are dictated by AMS Medical Protocols and include: Band-Aids, bandages and gauze, irrigation syringe, antiseptic prep pads, ace wrap, athletic tape, trauma shears, Sam Splint, moleskin, mole foam, hydrocortisone, antibiotic cream, safety pins, tweezers, thermometer, CPR mask, airway, and latex gloves.

Emergency rations: 7 days. While unlikely, it is possible that weather could prevent flying on the scheduled pickup date. Each expedition has a pre-packed 7-day backup supply of food and fuel. Also in the package: toilet paper, tampons, and playing cards.

NOTES

Please keep in mind that it is impossible to compile a 100% accurate equipment list. We have tried to give as much information as possible here. Please call or email us with your questions. We want every AMS student to understand his or her equipment needs, and we are here to help.

COURSE MOUNTAINEERING PERSONAL EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST



PERSONAL EQUIPMENT KEY

<i>\$</i>	For purchase at AMS
<i>RNT</i>	For rent at AMS
<i>N/C</i>	Available at no charge
<i>N/A</i>	Not available at AMS

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 mid-weight	\$
<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	\$45/55

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	\$15/20

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

SLEEPING

<input type="checkbox"/> Synthetic bag w/compression stuff sack	\$35/40
<input type="checkbox"/> Inflatable full-length sleeping pad	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Full-length closed cell foam sleeping pad	\$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	\$3 each
<input type="checkbox"/> Garbage bags (3)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Sled duffel	NC

TRAVEL

<input type="checkbox"/> Snow shoes	\$25/35
<input type="checkbox"/> Ski poles	\$20/30
<input type="checkbox"/> Avalanche transceiver	NC
<input type="checkbox"/> Avalanche probe	NC

SUN

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

TOILETRIES

<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet paper	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Hand disinfectant	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Handi Wipes (5-10)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Travel toothpaste	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Travel toothbrush	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Sanitary supplies (women)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Pee bottle	\$

CLIMBING

<input type="checkbox"/> Helmet	N/C
<input type="checkbox"/> Crampons w/ case	N/C
<input type="checkbox"/> Ice axe	N/C
<input type="checkbox"/> Seat harness	N/C
<input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical ascender w/sling	NC
<input type="checkbox"/> Carabiners (10)	\$1/2 each
<input type="checkbox"/> Locking carabiners (2)	\$1/2 each
<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"/> BIC lighter	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Earplugs	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Headlamp (April)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Notebook	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Pencil	\$

MEDICAL

<input type="checkbox"/> Ibuprofen/Advil/Motrin	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Acetaminophen/Tylenol	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Blister kit/moleskin	\$

OPTIONAL ITEMS

<input type="checkbox"/> Nose guard	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Pee funnel	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Neoprene gloves (July)	\$10/16
<input type="checkbox"/> Half-length pad	\$2/3
<input type="checkbox"/> Goggles (optional)	\$

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 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 allowing two (2) days on the return end of your travel plans (or purchasing flexible airline tickets) in the event that a storm keeps your course on the glacier for longer than expected. We will do our best to ensure that your course ends on schedule, and most do. However, we cannot guarantee flyable weather; remember that the small airplanes we use can only fly when the weather is suitable. We strongly suggest you plan to spend 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: TALKEETNA TO ANCHORAGE

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	www.alaskarailroad.com	From May 11: Daily train to/from Talkeetna from Anchorage and Fairbanks
Park Connection Motor Coach	(800) 208-0200	www.alaskacoach.com	From May 15: RT Daily Motorcoach Bus Service
Talkeetna Trip	(907) 203-1381	www.talkeetnatrip.com	Locally owned and operated
Denali Overland	(907) 733-2384	www.denalioverland.com	Locally owned and operated
Go Purple Shuttle	(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 nearly 300,000. Taxis from the airport to downtown take approximately 10-15 minutes. Some hotels offer free airport shuttle service. An internet search will yield many good options with a wide price range. The options below are popular.

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
Courtyard by Marriott	(907) 245-0322	www.marriott.com	Near the Anchorage Airport, airport shuttle

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.

Chinook Wind Cabins	(800) 643-1899	www.chinookwindcabins.com	Cabins and rooms, some with kitchenettes, next door to AMS.
Swiss Alaska Inn	(907) 733-2424	www.swissalaska.com	AMS discount, family-owned, restaurant, short walk to town.
Talkeetna Roadhouse	(907) 733-1351	www.talkeetnaroadhouse.com	AMS discount, rooms and bunks, famous for breakfasts and bakery, right in downtown.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

AMS recommends that you purchase travel and tuition/trip cancellation insurance immediately after paying your deposit. This insurance may cover costs if you are unable to join the course due to a personal emergency, 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.

Ripcord	(415) 481-0600	www.ripcordrescuetravelinsurance.com	Comprehensive Travel Insurance for Mountaineering Programs. Ask for Harbor Travel Insurance
TravelGuard	(800) 826-1300	www.travelguard.com www.travelguardworldwide.com	Adventure Sports Coverage for mountaineering Unavailable for WA residents and international travelers.
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

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 once 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 expedition. Please refer to the below map of Talkeetna.

