



The Forest Service (FS) aims to reduce avalanche risk on National Forest Lands. We use artillery to mitigate the avalanche hazard in ski areas. Outside ski areas, we provide the public with avalanche forecasts, enabling people to make informed decisions about their personal safety.

Why avalanches?

The Forest Service began an avalanche safety program 85 years ago. Because nearly all avalanche accidents involve recreation on National Forests and avalanches typically kill more people on National Forests than any other natural hazard, the Forest Service is the primary federal agency in this field.

What is the hazard?

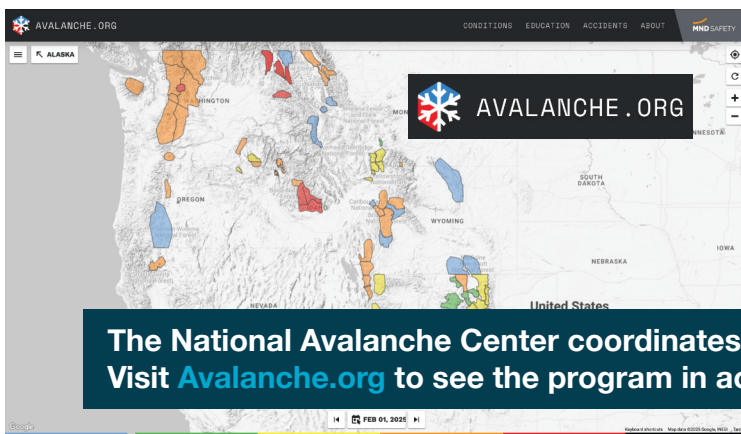
Avalanches are the only natural hazard humans can cause while moving through the landscape. Each winter, 25-30 people are killed by avalanches in the United States. A similar number are seriously injured. These numbers would be significantly higher without the FS avalanche program.



How do we reduce avalanche impacts to life and property?

The Avalanche Mitigation Program uses U.S. Army surplus Howitzers to trigger avalanches at Ski Areas operating on FS lands. It is governed by an Interagency Agreement between the Department of the Army and the Forest Service. The program is essential to maintain public safety for more than 5 million skier visits each winter. The entire FS operational cost is funded by participating Ski Areas.

The Avalanche Information and Education Program is described in FSM 2357. FS avalanche forecasts and education are used by millions of people each winter and have directly reduced the US avalanche fatality rate. More than half of the total funding comes from non-federal sources.



The National Avalanche Center coordinates, trains, and supports these programs daily. Visit [Avalanche.org](https://avalanche.org) to see the program in action.