

POSITION: AVALANCHE FORECASTER – VALDEZ, ALASKA

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Organization: Alaska Avalanche Information Center/Valdez Avalanche Center

Position: Avalanche Forecaster, Valdez, Alaska Forecast Area

Job Type: Temporary Seasonal Nov.1-April 30

Compensation: \$20-25/hour DOE

NOTE: THIS IS A PART-TIME, TEMPORARY SEASONAL POSITION WITH 30 HOURS/WEEK NOVEMBER 1 THROUGH APRIL 30. ALSO MAY INCLUDE A LIMITED NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL HOURS, AND SEASON WRAP-UP IN MAY. THIS POSITION IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR OVERTIME.

Valdez Avalanche Center (VAC) operates within the Alaska Avalanche Information Center (AAIC). AAIC promotes avalanche safety in Alaska through a program of forecasting and education reducing the impact of avalanches on recreation, industry and transportation. AAIC is committed to partnering with municipal, state, and federal agencies while serving the residents of and visitors to Alaska. The mission is to support and promote avalanche forecasts, education, research and professional development in the pursuit of healthy lifestyles and the reduction of unintentional injuries.

JOB DESCRIPTION

The VAC issues daily avalanche forecasts and avalanche warnings during the winter months to assist backcountry recreationalists, transportation and industry in making informed and safe decisions. VAC and AAIC staff also teach educational programs for backcountry recreationalists (skiers, snowboarders, snowmobilers, snowshoers, etc.), local emergency service personnel and others as requested.

ESSENTIAL FORECASTER JOB FUNCTIONS:

- Collect and record daily snowpack, weather, and avalanche observations
- Conduct regular fieldwork in backcountry avalanche terrain to determine avalanche hazard
- Issuance of daily backcountry avalanche forecasts for public dissemination
- When appropriate, issue avalanche warnings and interview with local media
- Interpret weather models and write a local mountain weather forecast
- Maintain a database of avalanche information. Update website and social media outlets
- Train and supervise interns, staff, volunteers and observers
- Teach classroom and field-based avalanche education programs for a variety of audiences
- Interface with avalanche safety operations including mechanized ski operations, backcountry guiding operations, search and rescue, and government agencies
- Participate in trainings, committees, and meetings of VAC and AAIC
- Field phone calls and email inquiries

CANDIDATE WILL BE COMPETENT IN THE FOLLOWING JOB SKILLS:

- Strong background and training in snowpack observation and avalanche hazard evaluation and companion rescue
- Strong backcountry skiing and/or snowboarding and/or snowmobiling skills
- Excellent physical condition with strong skills in mountain travel and winter survival
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Well-versed in a variety of computer programs/applications, online forecast presentation and avalanche information sharing.
- Knowledge of mountain weather computer models and influence on avalanche hazard

WORK ENVIRONMENT:

Field work will be performed outdoors in a winter environment. Travel will include accessing job sites by backcountry skis or snowboards and/or snowmobiles, sometimes through avalanche terrain. Alaska experiences a variety of snowpack and climates, including areas receiving large and frequent snowstorms and areas with low snow and a shallow snowpack. Mid-winter rain events are also common.

Minimum Qualifications, Substitutions, Conditions of Employment & Appeal Rights

Undergraduate or Graduate degree in a physical science such as Physics, Engineering, Meteorology, Physical Geography, Hydrology, or a closely related field AND two years of professional avalanche forecasting experience, which included at least one year of experience using web-based software; and using weather and snow modeling systems.

Compensation is an hourly wage and does not include a benefits package. Job load will include some weekends, evenings, and/or holidays.

NECESSARY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

- Must possess a current Wilderness First Responder certification or be willing and able to obtain the certification
- Must have professional avalanche training such as AAA/AIARE Avalanche Level 2-3, AVPRO, National Avalanche School or CAA Level 1-2.
- Must be willing and able to work full-time as required
- Must be willing and able to exert up to 20 lbs of force occasionally and/or up to 10 lbs of force frequently
- Must possess and maintain both, a valid driver's license and a vehicle for daily travel
- Ability to drive and travel backcountry through mountainous terrain in winter
- Must be willing and able to tolerate cold weather and wet or humid conditions

PREFERRED EXPERIENCE

- Familiarity with atmospheric physics and dynamics
- Familiarity with snow physics and avalanche dynamics
- Experience with modern avalanche and weather forecasting techniques
- Experience in technical writing and website build
- Experience in education of people of all ages
- Experience using snowmobiles in mountainous terrain
- Professional Member of AAA/CAA
- AIARE/AAA Avalanche Instructor

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

MUST have concluded previous employment in good standing to be eligible for hire.

NOTE: Application must include cover letter, résumé with three professional references, and copies of certifications. Submit to scarter@alaskasnow.org by October 1, 2017. Interviews will be conducted October 5-15, 2017 via Skype.