

AK Block Project Status Update 2008

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The AK Block is a large block snow test sized to the tester's weight and their ski or snowboard contact length, dug out on three sides, and loaded much like a Rutschblock. It has the advantages of quick and simple setup, large sample area, tester-weight compensation, numerical score, and direct sensory feedback. Statistical analysis indicates that the presence or absence of a back cut makes no significant difference, the AK Block and Rutschblock are comparable predictors of avalanche activity, and both are particularly useful as part of larger decision-making frameworks such as the Stability Wheel. The sizing table appears to work well, but verification and fine-tuning still require more fieldwork and analysis. This is an update of Glude and Mullen (2006), not new work. Injuries and workload prevented completion of block sizing studies this year. The authors are soliciting field data contributors for this final stage.