
Ian McCammon 1 Pascal Haegeli 2 Matt Gunn 2

1 SnowPit Technologies, Salt Lake City, UT, USA; 2 Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC, Canada

Increasing numbers of recreationists are accessing the backcountry beyond the boundaries of winter resorts. For recreationists, the sudden transition to backcountry avalanche conditions poses a risk management challenge. For resorts, the content and presentation of out-of-bounds (OB) hazard information presents a risk communication challenge. The goals of this project were to gain a better understanding of avalanche awareness among OB users and to identify effective strategies for informing their decisions in OB avalanche terrain. Because the OB phenomenon is multi-faceted and complex, we used a mixed-methods, multilevel ecological approach involving focus groups, intercept surveys, expert interviews, site visits, and a retrospective accident analysis. Qualitative analysis supported a precautionary stage model consisting of five general categories of OB user. Since each of these categories is characterized by a unique orientation towards risk, it appears likely that each category is best targeted by specific interventions. We conclude by presenting a preliminary framework for resort operators that facilitates diagnosis and treatment of common OB risk communication problems.