Avalanche Threats and Mitigation Measures in Canada

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This is a summary of the Public Safety Canada commissioned report to inventory current and predict future trends in avalanche threats and mitigation programs in Canada. By the winter of 2007, avalanches were responsible for at least 702 fatalities in Canada since the earliest recorded incident in 1782. Avalanches can affect people travelling and working on transportation corridors, ski area recreationists and guides, resource industry workers, energy generation facilities and transmission lines, and people in or near public and residential buildings. In addition to hazard assessments, mitigation programs include forecasting and control programs for roads, railroads, ski areas, commercial backcountry recreation operations, resource industry worksites and roads, energy generation facilities and transmission lines, as well as public and residential land use areas. Public programs provide avalanche safety education and avalanche conditions reports, forecasts, and warnings to self-directed backcountry recreationists. However, non-mitigated avalanche threats exist to all activity types in Canada. With the exception of residential and public land use, the various types of activity in avalanche terrain are expected to either maintain current levels or increase.