

Post Control Avalanches: definition, history, causes and the future

Michael Ferrari

1. Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe, Reno, NV, USA; 2. Consultant, Lake Tahoe, CA, USA

At developed ski areas the term post-control avalanches generally has been used to describe avalanches that occur after mitigation measures have been completed and when there has not been any subsequent snowfall between the time of the mitigation and the avalanche event. The term post-control avalanche should/does not imply a causative reason for the avalanche but is a descriptor of the time frame of a given avalanche and the mitigation performed prior to the release. Over the last decade, the number of post-control avalanches seems to have risen. A number of post-control avalanche fatalities at developed ski areas over the past few years have brought greater interest to these types of avalanches. Post-control avalanches can have a variety of causative and contributing factors. An understanding of the common threads of post-control avalanches is important in reducing their rate of occurrence. It is also important that practitioners have an understanding of the effects of explosives on the snowpack as it relates to post-control avalanches. Existing methods to mitigate post-control avalanches exist and greater knowledge may lead to the development of new techniques. Incidents of post-control avalanches should be investigated to improve our understanding of this phenomenon.