

# AVALANCHE PROBELINE GUIDON CORD

Frank P. Rossi

**ABSTRACT:** Use of a Guidon Cord has been recommended in order to maintain the proper spacing across the probe line so that one can achieve the statistical probability of detection for formal probing. Presented is a design for a Guideon Cord that is easy to deploy any usable length, easy to store without the problem becoming tangled. This cord is can be used for Open and Closed Order Coarse Probelines as well as Fine Probelines.

**KEYWORDS:** avalanche rescue; probing, guidon cord

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The GuidonCord is made with small loops for the Course Probe positions at 75 cm (30 in.) spacing. The loops permit the cord to be carried on a carabiner. This prevents tangling and allows only the amount needed to be deployed. The cord can be constructed with intermediate knots for the additional fine probe markings.

Painting every other knot black can aid in lining up probers for an Open-Order Coarse Probe.

## 2. MATERIAL

- Parachute Cord: Red, 3 mm (1/8 in.). Available from Cascade Toboggan, PO Box 1046, Hailey, ID 83333, phone (208) 788-0846, 500-ft spool, \$26.

- Carabiner, "keylock" style preferred to prevent the cord from catching in the notch on other style carabiners. Kong Ace Bentgate, and Petzl M10 Spirit Bentgate are two 'keylock style carabiners.

- Runner, 19 mm wide x 25 cm long.

- Concentrated acrylic black artist paint, thinned slightly with water.

## 3. KNOTS USED

**Triple Overhand Knot** is used for the additional Fine Probe marks.



Fig. 1 Triple Overhand Knot.

**Butterfly Knot** (Middleman's) for the loops. Keep them small, about 1- to 1.5-in. long. For directions on tying the Butterfly Knot see *Mountain Travel & Rescue*, NSP #509, page 63.



Fig. 2 Butterfly Knot.

## 4. GUIDON CORD CONSTRUCTION:

### 4.1 COARSE PROBE

This cord is quite easy to tie. Time required to tie the knots is about 16 minutes.

- 66 feet of 1/8-in. dia. parachute cord is needed.
- Start about 24 in. from one end and tie a Butterfly Knot loop.
- Tie a Butterfly Knot loop every 75 cm (30 in.) until 20 loops have been tied.
- Cut the remaining cord 4 feet beyond the last loop.
- Tie a large hand loop in the 4-foot end.
- The short end is tied to a carabiner and runner.
- Paint every other loop black.

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## 4.2 FINE PROBE

This is much harder to tie than the Coarse Probe Guidon Cord, because half the length of the cord must be pulled through each Triple Overhand Knot. However, it is worth the effort. This guidon cord can be used for both coarse and fine probing. Time required to tie the knots is about 64 minutes.

- 77 feet of 1/8-in. dia. parachute cord is needed.
- Start about 45 cm (18 in.) from the middle of the cord and tie a Butterfly Knot loop.
- 25 cm (10 in.) from the first loop tie a Triple Overhand Knot.
- Tie another Triple Overhand Knot 25 cm (10 in.) beyond the above Triple Overhand Knot.
- 25 cm (10 in.) beyond the second Triple Overhand Knot tie another Butterfly Knot loop.
- Repeat until you come to near the end of the cord.

- End with one Triple Overhand Knot beyond the last Butterfly Knot loop.

- Start from the first loop made near the middle of the cord and work toward the other end of the cord. Tie a total of 20 loops.

- End with one Triple Overhand Knot beyond the last Butterfly Knot loop.

- The pattern should be:  
x loop x x loop x x loop x x loop x x loop x  
(x = triple overhand knot).

- Tie a large hand loop in the 4-foot end.

- The short end is tied to a carabiner and runner.

- Paint every other loop black, and the triple overhand knot on each side of it.

**x loop x x loop x x loop x x loop x**

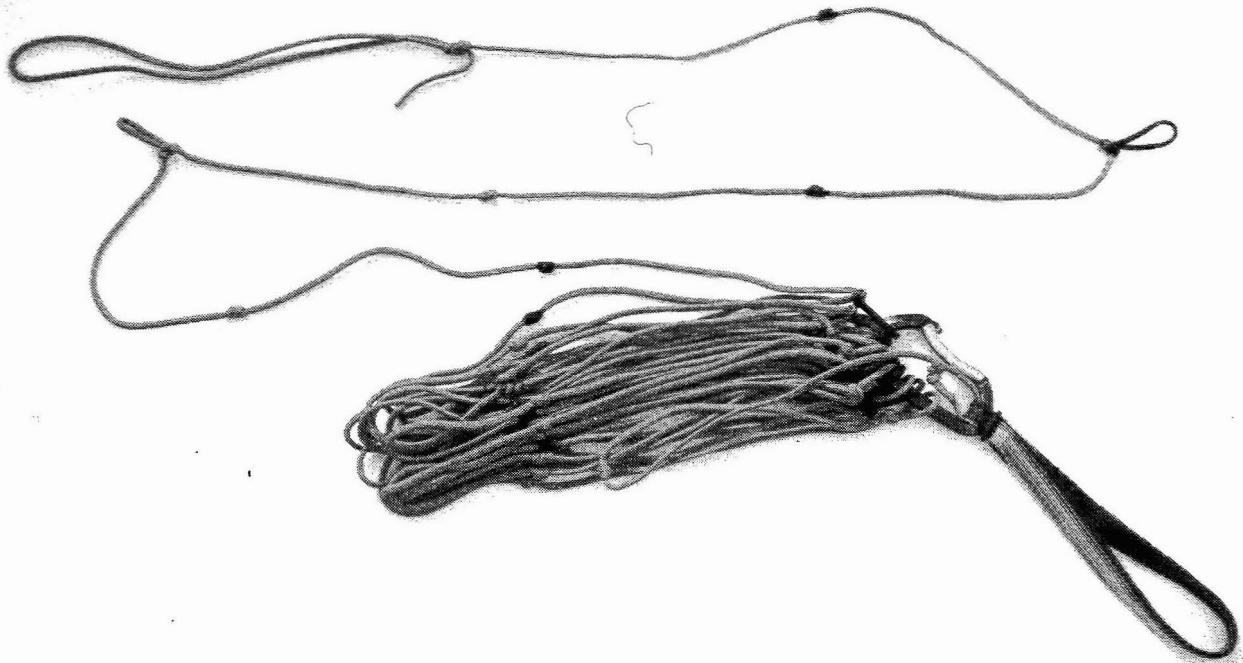


Fig. 3 Fine Probe Guidon Cord.