



**Date:** January 10, 2009

**Event:** **Avalanche Awareness Days,**  
Grouse Mountain Resort, North Vancouver

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***Check Against Delivery***

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- Thank you all for coming today.
- Each year, Avalanche Awareness Days are a vital reminder to everyone who participates in winter activities that avalanches are a very real risk that they should be prepared for.
- Recently, we were tragically reminded of how real that risk is.
- On December 28, eight snowmobilers perished in an avalanche near Fernie. These men were very experienced and well equipped.
- On New Years Eve, a skier perished in an avalanche on Blackcombe. Another skier lost his life on Whistler the very next day.
- Already this season, B.C. has seen 10 lives taken by avalanches.
- It is a tragic fact that 65 per cent of all avalanche fatalities across the country happen in B.C.
- Across the country, on average 14 people die in avalanches every year.
- My sincere condolences go out to the family and friends of all those who have passed.
- The reality is a harsh one. Because the truth is...even the best preparation and equipment isn't an assurance that you won't run into trouble.
- It can't guarantee your safety...but having the right equipment and knowledge will certainly increase your chances of saving your life.
- That's what Avalanche Awareness Days is all about.

## **Avalanche Awareness Days**

- Today we're here in the hopes that we can once again educate people about the dangers of avalanches and how to prepare for and avoid them.
- We want people to know that they can access training for avalanche safety through the Canadian Avalanche Association.
- We want to make sure people have the right equipment with them, including a trip plan, avalanche transceivers, shovels and a probe.
- There's a lot of winter fun to be had in British Columbia, and we're not here to take away from that fun.
- But educate yourself about avalanche dangers and then prepare and plan appropriately.

## **Conclusion**

- Sometimes, there's nothing you can do to avoid nature's dangers.
- But everyone can increase their chances by making sure they have the best knowledge, training and equipment available for the conditions.
- I urge all British Columbians...for their own safety...to stay out of restricted areas and take the necessary precautions to keep themselves safe in the outdoors.
- Thank you.