



Avalanches in Catalonia: Knowledge, Prediction and Prevention

Avalanches are a natural phenomenon most people are not familiar with. Until winter mountain sports became popular in the early 20th century, only the people living in the Pyrenees were familiar with them. Most people are now aware of them, especially people who practice winter mountain sports and especially since the 1970s, when mountain tourism became very popular.

Avalanches have historically had a considerable effect on people living in mountainous areas, but the need for new housing and infrastructure arising from tourism, along with other new needs associated with this change, have resulted in additional risk that has to be monitored.

- To a certain extent, avalanches are a phenomenon that can be predicted and controlled.
- The strategy for reducing risk is based on knowledge, spatio-temporal forecasting and protection.
- Moreover, education is key, especially for people who actively participate in winter mountain sports.

To address these topics, work was started 25 years ago to improve knowledge on how to reduce this risk.

This exhibition describes the work undertaken since 1986, the basic ideas behind the formation of avalanches, how they can be forecast and how their effects can be reduced.



Exhibition

The exhibition consists of 24 information panels grouped in 4 sections:

Section 1. Introduction

- Providing avalanche information and prevention services in Catalonia for 25 years

Section 2. Avalanches: Basic Concepts

- What are avalanches and what causes them?
- Factors involved in triggering an avalanche.
- How are avalanches measured? What damage do they cause?

Section 3. Avalanches in Catalonia and around the World

- Historic avalanches in Catalonia
- Historic avalanches in the Pyrenees
- Avalanches around the world
- Recent avalanches in Catalonia
- Avalanche accidents in Catalonia during mountain activities

Section 4. Prevention of and Protection against Avalanche Hazards

- Forecasting in terms of time: the Avalanche Danger Bulletin
- Local forecasting
- Snow Observation Network (NIVOBS)
- Network of snow observation stations in Catalonia
- Forecasting in terms of location
- The ALLAUCAT Plan
- Risk awareness: danger and vulnerability
- Prevention of and protection from avalanche hazards
- Self-protection in mountain activities

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