

The Bottom Line

This is the final bulletin published by the Mount Washington Avalanche Center for the 2019-2020 winter season. It will remain in effect until complete melt out. Travel in the backcountry requires careful snow evaluation and mountain sense. Hazards due to snow and ice will persist until both are all gone. Avalanches can and do occur in April and May. Make use of available PPE such as crampons, ice axes, helmets, and avalanche rescue gear. If venturing into the mountains, be sure to use all available resources to help plan your trip and make safe travel decisions.

A section of the Tuckerman Ravine Trail is now closed to all use. This section extends from Lunch Rocks to the top of the Headwall, where it meets the Alpine Garden Trail. The closure includes skiing and riding the Lip and Sluice. This annual closure (36CFR261.55(a)) is designed to protect the public and rescuers from the hazards associated with the waterfall and crevasses which are just beginning to emerge. Violating this closure is a misdemeanor offense and will be enforced. **Additionally, all facilities that provide amenities for Tuckerman and Huntington Ravine are now closed. This includes bathrooms, camping, and all shelter.**

Avalanche Hazard

Typically, as the spring progresses, the snowpack becomes stable and avalanche concerns lessen compared to other objective hazards. That being said, avalanches can occur whenever there is enough snow to recreate. The following red flags indicate avalanche danger may be elevated:

- Recent avalanche activity
- Signs of unstable snow like shooting cracks, hollow sounding slabs, or an upside-down snowpack
- Significant new snow
- Blowing snow
- Rapid warming. Look for roller balls and pinwheels as indicators the snowpack is warming

Mountain Weather

Despite what the calendar says, snow is never out of the question in any month on Mount Washington. Spring and early summer bring rapid changes to our snowpack, with conditions often changing by the hour. Plan accordingly for these changes by reading the weather forecast before you head out and bringing the appropriate gear for your objective.

Mountain Hazards

The following is a list of hazards you may encounter if recreating in steep, snow covered terrain. These all have mitigation measures as well as locations that they more commonly appear. Realize that many of these are weather dependent and that even the professionals do their weather and conditions homework before venturing into the field.

- Moats and other deep melt holes
- Waterfall holes
- Opening streams and undermined snow
- Glide cracks
- Falling ice and rock
- Avalanches
- Long sliding falls
- Sliding falls, even short ones

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Please Remember: Safe travel in avalanche terrain requires training and experience. This forecast is just one of many decision making tools. You control your own risk by choosing where, when, and how you travel. Understand that the avalanche danger may change when actual weather differs from the weather forecast. For more information contact the Forest Service Snow Rangers, the AMC at the Pinkham Notch Visitor Center, or the caretakers at Hermit Lake Shelters.