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‘Reaching the summit is optional. Getting down is mandatory.’
Ed Viesturs

Foreword

The mountains are a huge playground for climbers, walkers, skiers and snowboarders. However, the enjoyment and excitement offered come at a price. Every year people are seriously injured or killed in avalanches. As mountain users we have a responsibility to minimise the risk presented by snow and the mountains.



Snow is a unique substance. It falls in many different forms and, as part of a snowpack, changes its structure continuously. This makes it very difficult to assess the stability of a snow-covered slope.

Unfortunately, there is no crystal ball which tells us when a slope is safe or unsafe. This book aims to provide the reader with an introduction to the fundamentals of avalanche awareness. The solid, straightforward information, from professionals who spend their lives in the mountains, is presented in a form that is easy to understand and memorise, so that it can be used as an ‘on-the-hill check list’ to assess the stability of a slope and the safety of the terrain.

Brian Farquharson