

Avalanche Runout

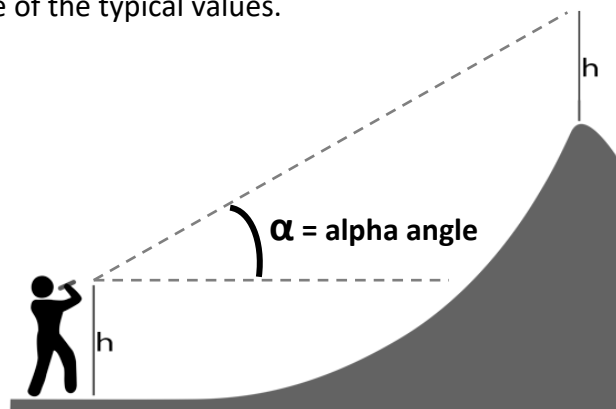
During times of high avalanche danger, it's important to stay off of and out from under potential avalanche paths. But how far away is safe?

In the Field

You can estimate how far an avalanche might run by measuring the **runout angle** (α_i) to your position. This is the angle formed between the toe of a potential avalanche and the starting zone. If this angle is less than the **alpha angle** (α_c) of the path (the runout angle of a very large avalanche), then you're likely safe.

The alpha angle for an avalanche path depends on snow climate, path size and track configuration. The table below shows some of the typical values.

SNOW CLIMATE	ALPHA ANGLE
Continental	19°
Intermountain	21°
Maritime	23°



Avalanche paths that are very large or very constricted may have alpha angles as low as 17°. At times of extreme instability, you may want to be as far away as 15°, particularly when choosing a campsite.

For more info, see *Staying Alive in Avalanche Terrain* by Bruce Temper

