

IDAHO MOUNTAIN RECREATION TRIP CLASSIFICATIONS

Hiking, Backpacking, Nordic Skiing, Snowshoeing

Because the IMR offers so many trips, we use several criteria in our trip descriptions to classify our various types of trips, focusing on round-trip mileage and total elevation gain. No classification system is perfect, and trip difficulties can vary greatly depending on the season and other factors. If after reading the trip description you have any questions about a trip's difficulty, contact the trip leader.

HIKING TRIPS (including some trips that require rock-climbing skills) are normally classified as A through D, with "A" being the easiest and "D" being most difficult.

Class A: Up to 8 miles round trip and 1200 ft. elevation gain. Prior hiking experience is usually not necessary; some level of physical fitness is helpful.

Class B: Up to 8-12 miles round trip and/or up to 2500 ft. elevation gain. Moderate to strenuous physical activity. Some prior experience is beneficial.

Class C: Up to 15 miles round trip and 3500 ft. elevation gain. This is Strenuous to very strenuous physical activity. Prior experience and training is beneficial very, very helpful.

Class D: Hikes up to or over 15 miles round trip and/or greater than 3500 ft. elevation gain. These require very strenuous physical activity often including exposure or requiring use of technical skills. Knowledge based on prior experience and training is highly beneficial.

Additional Hike Information:

If you also see the letter "***E***" ***after the classification*** (such as C-E or D-E), the trip involves ***exposure*** (i.e., risk of falling) and may require advanced climbing skills. If you have fear of heights or are unsure of your ability to handle exposure, you may wish to go on a different activity, or consult with the Trip Leader to get input from them.

Within each of the above letter classifications, hikes may also be described subjectively as ***Easy, Moderate, and Difficult*** in comparison to other trips of the same classification. Thus, a Difficult B hike is harder than an Easy B hike, but easier than a Moderate C hike.

"Exploratory" in the trip description simply means the leader has researched the route, but has not been there before. Participants should expect potential route-finding and not a clear-cut/known trip.

The following shorthand descriptions may also be used to describe the difficulty of the terrain on a hike:

On Trail: The trip is mainly on improved trail in reasonable condition. Any portion of the trip not on trail is easy "like trail" conditions.

Off Trail: Below timberline (about 11,000 in Idaho), the trip may involve bushwhacking or travel through forested terrain. Above timberline, the trip may cross open tundra or involve Class 2 hiking under the Yosemite Decimal System: i.e., moving on or around small boulders where the use of hands may be used, but only to maintain balance. No special hiking or climbing skills are required. Exposure is usually minimal or nonexistent.

Scrambling: The trip involves Class 3 climbing: i.e., climbing that is relatively easy with plentiful handholds. Although a rope is rarely required, Class 3 climbing may be intimidating for less experienced mountaineers. Always consider bringing and wearing a climbing helmet to ensure your own safety. A fall on a Class 3 route usually results in a minor injury, but can on occasion result in serious injury or death.

Semi-technical: The trip involves Class 4 climbing: i.e., within the realm of technical rock climbing, but with relatively plentiful handholds. Some people will desire a rope, but usually just for protection on the descent. Participants must wear climbing helmets. A fall without the protection of a rope on a Class 4 route usually results in serious injury or death.
Technical climb classifications

BACKPACKING TRIP CLASSIFICATIONS

Easy: Up to 5 miles and 1500 ft. elevation gain per day. The trip is on trail.

Moderate: Up to 8 miles and 2500 ft. elevation gain per day. Part of the trip may be off trail.

Difficult: Over 8 miles or 2500 ft. elevation gain per day. The trip is physically demanding and may involve off trail travel over steep slopes or rock.

SKI TOUR/NORDIC SKIING CLASSIFICATIONS:

If you are unsure whether your skiing abilities (especially turning and stopping skills) are suitable for a trip, please contact the trip leader.

Easy I: 1 to 3 miles round trip on generally flat terrain. Suitable for beginners.

Easy II: 3 to 6 miles round trip and up to 600 ft. elevation gain.

Easy III: 6 to 8 miles round trip or 600 ft. to 800 ft. elevation gain.

Moderate I: 800 ft. to 1100 ft. elevation gain.

Moderate II: 1100 ft. to 1500 ft. elevation gain.

Moderate III: 1500 ft. to 1800 ft. elevation gain.

Advanced I: 1800 ft. to 2500 ft. elevation gain, 15-20 miles.

Advanced II: Over 2500 ft. elevation gain.

Advanced ski tours are generally over 10 miles on difficult terrain and at a fast pace. To go on an Advanced ski trip, you must be able to break trail for three miles and must have excellent Nordic downhill ability. In addition to the IMR essentials, you should carry a shovel, avalanche beacon, and any extra items required by the leader.

SNOWSHOE TRIP CLASSIFICATIONS:

Easy: Up to 5 miles round trip and 600 ft. elevation gain.

Moderate: Up to 8 miles round trip and 1200 ft. elevation gain.

Difficult: Over 8 miles round trip or 1200 ft. elevation gain.