



St. Elias Alpine Guides, LLC
Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, Alaska
(888) 933-5427 ♦ (907) 345-9048
www.steliasguides.com

Alaska Backpacking and Hiking – Backcountry Skills Seminar

Even for experienced people, hiking and backpacking in Alaska requires a unique set of skills. There are very few trails in this remote wilderness. Many popular destinations require glacier travel and black bears and grizzlies abound. River crossings, with their swift currents and cold water, present one of the most dangerous and underrated challenges for people hiking and backpacking in Alaska. Rescues in this remote region are costly and often jeopardize the safety of the rescue personnel involved. Responsible hikers and backpackers are wise to educate themselves before departing for their trip. Our one day Backcountry Skills Seminar gives you the opportunity to learn safe backcountry travel techniques from our professional mountain guides.



Course Highlights:

- Learn safe backcountry travel techniques from professional mountain guides.
- Practice safe river crossing techniques.
- Discuss safe camping and travel techniques in bear country.
- Go over safe glacier travel techniques on the Root Glacier.

Backcountry Skills Seminar – What’s Included?



Your one-day Backcountry Skills Seminar begins at our headquarters in the historic Motherlode Powerhouse in McCarthy, Alaska. Here you will meet your guide and begin the day learning to read and safely cross the swift glacial rivers commonly found in Alaska. McCarthy Creek, which forms the southern border of our property, is a perfect place to safely practice these techniques.

After drying off and warming up, you and your guide travel to the historic mining town of Kennecott, Alaska.

From our office in Kennecott, you make your way out the 2-mile (3.2 km) trail to the Root Glacier. The glacier provides a perfect “classroom” to learn about glaciers, glacier travel, crampon and ice axe techniques, and various improvisational techniques. The 5,000 ft. (1,524m) Stairway Icefall and 16,390 ft (4,995m) Mt. Blackburn provide a stunning backdrop for this portion of the seminar.

After mastering basic glacier travel, you and your guide leave the ice to discuss bears. The black and grizzly bears that make their home in the Wrangell St. Elias National Park are magnificent, wild creatures. However, they demand respect and it is essential that backpackers and hikers practice responsible bear techniques when visiting the Park. This will help ensure that the bears remain wild and are there for future generations to enjoy. Bear behavior, camp setup, food storage, and emergency techniques are all covered in this portion of the seminar. You’ll also have a chance to test fire your bear spray and discuss the function of bear canisters and electric fences.

The Backcountry Skills Seminar provides information and training essential for safe hiking and backpacking in Alaska. Although the day is long, the skills and techniques that you will learn are required knowledge for responsible backpackers and hikers enjoying the wilderness splendor of the Wrangell St. Elias National Park.

