PATIENT - INITIAL ASSESSMENT

A Airways

Establish patient airways
Remove obstructions - snow / ice etc.
Remove helmet to gain control of airways

Most deaths in avalanches are caused by asphyxiation, and due to high energy there is a high possibility of physical injuries.

B Breathing

Is the patient breathing normally? Look, listen and feel
Monitor respiration, look and listen for changes. Check regularly

- Conscious patient: elevated torso, comfortable position
- Unconscious patient: **Always** in recovery position

Start CPR if the patient isn´t breathing

C Circulation

Uncover and stop large bleeding
Pale skin, cyanosis, rapid pulse and respiration may be signs of larger blood loss

Initiate rapid transportation to hospital if injuries are suspected

Swift and targeted "top-to-toe" examination

Prevent hypothermia
Shelter the patient from weather with available gear

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ALERT AND INITIAL SEARCH

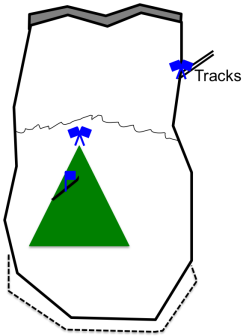
Notice:

- How many victims, last seen area and direction of travel
- Alert search and rescue: **Dial 112**
- If there´s no mobile reception in the area: Search for at least 30 minutes before leaving the accident site to get help

Is it safe to access the area?

Prioritize an initial search area

Which area has the highest probability to find the victim?
Where was the victim caught and last seen?



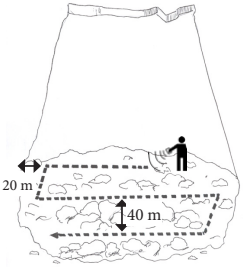
Hasty search

- Get an overview, cover the avalanche debris rapidly on skis or by foot
- Avalanche rescue transceiver in receive mode
- Look for visible objects and clues - spot-probe around these areas
- Shout and listen for the victims response
- Look for tracks into the avalanche

TRANSCEIVER SEARCH AND PROBING

Transceiver search

- Conduct a thorough transceiver search
- Repeat several times if victim has a transceiver
- Perform transceiver search in parallel with the initial search
- Pinpoint victim by probing



Thorough surface search

- Line up rescuers to walk side-by-side in a search line
- Thoroughly look for small, visible objects
- Cover the area from different directions
- Turn over large pieces of debris / blocks of snow

Pinpoint probing

Use pinpoint probing around entrapment points (trees, boulders, etc.)

Organized probing

- Line-up rescuers with palm to palm
- Probe once left, once center and once right, 50 cm apart
- Move one step forward (70 cm) and repeat
- 4-6 persons in each probe line
- Search prioritizing speed over detailed accuracy
- Search an area several times before deeming it 100% checked out

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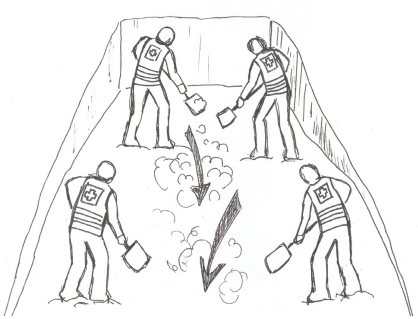
LOCATION AND EXCAVATION

- Always leave the avalanche probe in place when the victim has been located - it is the only connection point to the victim
- Confirm location with an additional avalanche probe
- Start digging from the downhill side - 1.5 x burial depth, and dig horizontally towards the victim
- Rotate diggers often - maintain efficiency



- Locate head and torso as fast as possible
- Remove snow from head and torso first to allow free airways and chest (breathing) movement
- Observe if air pocket is present (=no packed snow in mouth and nose)
- Avoid unnecessary and large movements of the victim - prioritize airways