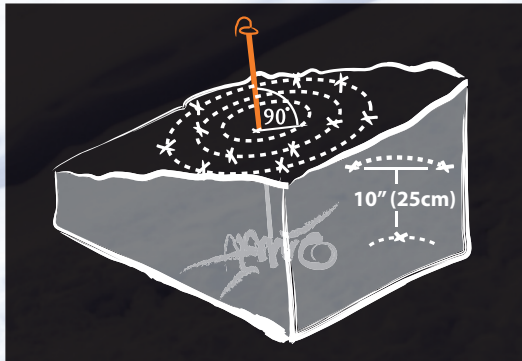


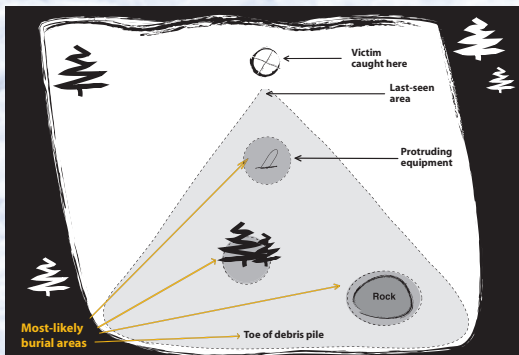
Probing 101

Avalanche probes are essential pieces of snow safety equipment that should always be carried in your pack or inside your shovel shaft. Below are the probing techniques and probe lengths recommended by most avalanche professionals.



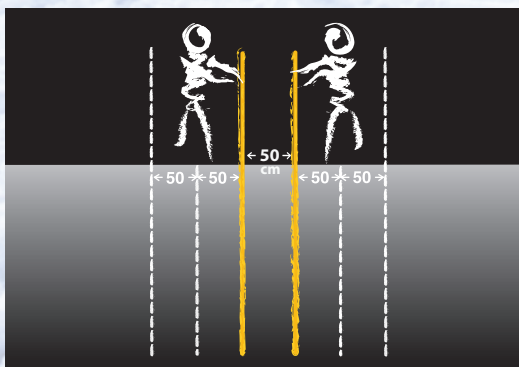
Beacon Search Probing

- The pinpoint search (within three meters) is the trickiest part of a beacon search. A probe can quickly confirm the location and depth of burial.
- Probes with depth markings aid in determining exact depth and appropriate excavation area size.
- From your lowest distance reading, probe 10 in (25cm) apart in concentric circles.
- Since the pinpoint search is done along the snow surface, insert probe perpendicular to the surface, not straight down.
- After striking the victim, leave in place and start shoveling downhill of the probe.
- Recommended probe length: 1.8 to 3 meters.



Spot Probing

- Performed if beacons are not used.
- Probe up to 6 feet deep (1.5 m) in likely burial spots.
- These include the fall line below last-seen-area; around the victim's equipment on surface; above and below rocks & trees; depressions, curves, and the toe of the debris pile.
- Studies show that avalanche victims rarely survive below 6 feet (1.5 meters). Therefore a live recovery is more likely if you probe more areas than if you probe deeper.
- Recommended probe length: 2 to 3 meters.



Organized Probe Lines

- Usually performed by search-and-rescue groups outside the victim's own party.
- Rarely result in live recoveries.
- Searchers line up wrist-to-wrist (arms outstretched) across the slope, make three holes in a line, 50cm apart, then move forward one step and repeat.
- Probing depth should be consistent between all searchers.
- Long probes enable searchers to stand upright while probing, minimizing back fatigue.
- Recommended probe length: 3 meters.

To hone your beacon and probe techniques, practice at a **BCA Beacon Training Park** in your area.

➔ **Profile 240 Probe**
with Quickie hardware

➔ www.backcountryaccess.com/education

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