



# ASCENDING PATH

## CLIENT, STUDENT and EMPLOYEE

### ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

*Ascending Path's mission is to inspire and cultivate personal and environmental responsibility, introspection and integrated thinking by providing superior wilderness guiding services in Alaska.*

AP's Adventures are day tour and overnight wilderness trips with the goal of authentically experiencing Alaska. The health and well-being, of our clients and staff and experiential education are top priorities. The wilderness environments that AP's tours travel through are remote, dynamic, and physically and emotionally challenging. These environments, along with the educational activities conducted and the traveling conditions encountered, require each client to be fully committed to and capable of working hard, taking responsibility for him/herself, and working effectively in the group to achieve the goals of the tour.

The Essential Eligibility Criteria are applicable for all AP clients and participants. A qualified person is one who can meet the EEC for participation in the program activity.

<b>ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION WITH ASCENDING PATH</b>
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Section One lists the EEC applicable for all AP's Tours, Events and Services.

**Day Hiking clients simply need to fulfill all of section 1.**

#### 1.a. Safety and Judgment

Each participant must...

1. Be able to independently identify and recognize environmental hazards. These hazards may include, but are not limited to, falling objects/rocks, loose rock and unstable surfaces, rugged steep and uneven terrain, cliff edges, crevasses, icebergs, cold still and moving water (fast or slow) such as rivers, creeks, surf, lakes or tides; and potentially hazardous animals and insects.
2. Recognize and understand the hazards and risks posed by other clients and participants, which include, but are not limited to, fatigue, state of mind, and actions that may influence judgment and decision-making.
3. Recall and understand hazards and risks previously explained by guides and facilitators.
4. Be able to effectively alert and warn others of potential or impending dangers such as falling rocks, aggressive animals, or other environmental hazards.
5. Be able to effectively signal or notify guides or other clients of personal distress, injury, or need for assistance.

### **1.a. Continued Safety and Judgment**

6. Be able to do the preceding warnings and notifications up to a distance of 50 meters and in conditions with limited visibility such as in darkness or inclement weather or with loud background noise, such as helicopters, high winds or while near roaring rivers.
7. Act reliably around above stated hazards to minimize risk even when not directly supervised.
8. Independently perceive, understand, and follow directions and instructions given by others to be able to successfully execute appropriate and perhaps unfamiliar, techniques to avoid hazards and /or manage risks. These directions may be given before the hazard or risk is encountered or may need to be given during exposure to the hazard/risk and out of necessity and practicality are often given orally.
9. Be able to move about on varied angled graveled and un-maintained class 2 trails.
10. Be able to stay alert and to focus attention for up to several hours at a time while traveling in wilderness terrain, on guided trips, or receiving instructions.
11. Be able to respond appropriately to stress or crisis such as when encountering large and/or potentially hazardous animals, severe weather, or a medical emergency.
12. If taking prescription medications, be able to maintain proper dosage by self-medicating without assistance from guides or others (except possibly in emergency situations).
13. Complete and sign AP's adventure application and waiver.

### **1.b Environmental Ethics**

Each participant must...

1. Learn and then practice Leave No Trace techniques.

*Section 2 & 3 lists the EEC specific to different course types or activities. All participants must satisfy the EEC listed in section one and the EEC in section two or three that are specific to the tour they are considering.*

### **2.a Spencer Iceberg Kayaking**

Participants must: Fulfill all sections in 1 and 2a.

1. Control a paddle and pull it through the water in order to steer and propel the boat forward.
2. Be able to perceive, understand and respond to audible commands given by a boating partner or communicate such commands to boating partners (double sea kayak) used to maneuver a boat to maintain proper heading or avoid obstacles.
3. Be able to exit a capsized boat, fend for self while in the cold water away from the boat, attain and maintain correct body position if out of boat in a rapid or rough waves, exit out of the water to shore, grab onto another boat or rope for rescue purposes, and/or perform self-rescue or cooperate with assisted rescue.

4. Be under 6'7" tall and weigh more than 50lbs and less than 250lbs. Guest must notify upon booking, if not within these parameters to make other arrangements and/or rent other gear (at an additional cost) outside these manufacturer safety limits.

### **2.b EPIC Spencer Glacier Hike & Kayak and Alyeska Alpine Hikes:**

**EPIC Spencer Glacier Hike & Kayak** participants must: Fulfill all sections in 1, 2a and 2b.

**Helicopter Glacier Hike and Alyeska Alpine Hikes** participants must: Fulfill all sections in 1 and 2b.

1. Be able to hike off trail in rugged unstable terrain with loose rock, mud, ice and slippery features.
2. Maintain balance walking at heights, with crampons.

### **2.c Overnight Camping and Expedition Behavior/Outdoor Skills:**

Each participant must: Fulfill all sections in 1, 2a, 2b, and 2c.

1. Learn and competently perform the fundamental camping skills of finding a campsite, setting up a shelter, and cooking with a camp stove.
2. Remain adequately hydrated, fed, and properly dressed so as to remain generally healthy and be able to avoid environmental injuries such as hypothermia, heat illness, sunburn or frostbite.
3. Be able to perform, after being instructed, the above activities independently in cooperation with fellow clients without direct supervision.
4. Be able to move about the campsite in order to attend classes, attend to toileting needs, and contribute to camping tasks as necessary.
5. Function in a physically demanding, remote backcountry environment for the uninterrupted period of the trip length, which can range from one day to four weeks or more. Conditions of this environment may vary from cold (below minus 20<sup>o</sup> F) and may include, but is not limited to, rain, snow or hail, uninterrupted sun and/or wind, or the absence thereof. The remoteness is such that it may require at minimum 1-day's travel, but perhaps in excess of 1 week's travel, to reach the nearest road head and advanced medical care.
6. Work effectively as a member of a team despite potentially stressful and difficult conditions. This may require problem solving on an interpersonal or group level as well as a willingness to accept differences.
7. Contribute to a safe learning environment—no verbal or physical inappropriate behavior of others is tolerated for any reason.
8. Be able to willingly and equally share responsibility with tent mates in daily tent group chores. Each client may not do an equal share each day, but over a period of several days each client should do a proportionate share. All clients are learning the skills and being challenged by the conditions and activities; there can be no expectation that any other client will be able to continually assume a greater share of the work or that an instructor can continually focus a greater share of his/her energy and time on one client.

9. Effectively communicate ideas and concerns on an individual and group level.

**2.c Continued Overnight Camping and Expedition Behavior/Outdoor Skills:**

10. Have the cognitive ability to learn necessary skills given normal time limitations of an Ascending Path tour.

**2.d. Expeditions and Backpacking trips:**

Each participant must: Fulfill all sections in 1, 2a, 2b, 2c and 2d.

1. At minimum, be able to travel over and negotiate through varied wilderness terrain with a backpack weighing up to or exceeding 60 pounds, or 40%–45% of body weight.
2. Travel conditions may include, but are not limited to, rough, rugged, uneven steep and sloping terrain; human made and animal made trails; rocky terrain that may range from smooth bedrock to extensive areas of large rock boulders (boulder fields); needing to cross rivers and creeks without the aid of bridges up to three feet or more in depth; ascending, descending or traversing slopes covered in snow, rocks or vegetation; bushwhacking off trail through thick standing and/or downed vegetation. Any and all travel can occur during periods of inclement weather or nighttime hours.
3. Travel distances can range from less than one mile to more than ten miles in one day.
4. Travel duration can range from less than one hour to more than 12 hours in one day and occur on successive days.
5. Have average strength and endurance and basic balance and agility to travel through such terrain with a backpack.
6. Have the ability to have a third point of contact for balance purposes, such as with hand(s) or to hold an ice axe/walking stick, for travel through deep rivers, on snow slopes or ascending or descending slopes.
7. Although groups will often be able to take hourly breaks or camp early if weather becomes hazardous, occasionally this is not possible. Examples include: descending/ascending a 2000' boulder choked gully; descending a peak with a threatening thunderstorm; descending a mountain pass in similar conditions.

**2.e. Top Roped Rock or Helicopter Ice Climbing**

**Top Roped Rock Climbing:** Each participant must: Fulfill all sections in 1 and 2e.

**Helicopter Ice Climbing:** Each participant must: Fulfill all sections in 1, 2b and 2e.

1. Effectively communicate independently in an oral dialogue over a distance of up to 35 feet when participating in top roped rock climbing or ice climbing.
2. The potential necessary communication of climbing signals, may include, hand signals, spoken signals or a rope tug system. Electronic aids are likely not reliable.
3. Listen to instructions to learn the techniques needed to top rope climb, maintain correct body positions and alignment on the rock or ice with the supplied climbing gear.

4. Use all climbing safety gear supplied.

## 2.f. Mountaineering or Advanced Climbing

Each participant must: Fulfill all sections in 1 and 2.

1. Effectively communicate independently in an oral dialogue over a distance of up to 50 meters when participating in multi-pitch rock climbing or alpine mountaineering or during glacier travel.
2. The potential necessary communication of climbing signals, may include, hand signals, spoken signals or a rope tug system. Electronic aids are likely not reliable.  
  
A) More notably, communication includes both: a. Direction from the guide as to what the client should do, e.g. if the client falls 30 feet (approx. 10 meters) into a crevasse, direction regarding the procedures to be used needs to be communicated; on a multi-pitch climb if the rope becomes jammed and the guide and client must communicate and work together to figure out what the problem is and how best to solve it. b. Response from the client to the guide, e.g. if a client falls or has difficulty with a section of the climb and the guide has to determine, by asking questions, about the client's well-being and whether rescue procedures are necessary.
3. Provide a reliable belay to another climber during roped climbing. To do so, a client must be able to reliably manipulate a climbing rope through a belay device such as an ATC, Grigri, or other such device and understand the necessary climbing signals. The guides leading the course may deem a backup belay person is necessary.
5. Independently tie the overhand and figure of eight series of knots.
6. Perform a self-arrest with an ice axe if traveling on snow or glaciers.
7. Reliably and independently perform simple technical tasks such as tying into a rope, clipping into an anchor and getting into a harness without the direct supervision of a guide.

## 3. Winter Snowshoeing, Winter Helicopter Ice Climbing & Glacier Hiking

**Winter Snowshoeing** Each participant must: Fulfill all sections in 1, 3a and 3b.

3.a.

1. Be able to hike off trail in rugged unstable terrain with unpacked powder snow, hardpacked snow, loose rock, mud, ice and slippery features.
2. Maintain balance walking with snowshoes.

3.b.

1. Remain adequately hydrated, fed, and properly dressed so as to remain generally healthy and be able to avoid environmental injuries such as hypothermia, heat illness or frostbite.
2. Be able to perform, after being instructed, the above activities independently in cooperation with fellow clients without direct supervision.

3. Function in a physically demanding, remote backcountry environment for the uninterrupted period of the trip length, which can range from one day or more. Conditions of this environment may vary from cold (below minus 20° F) and may include, but is not limited to, rain, snow or hail, uninterrupted sun and/or wind, or the absence thereof. The remoteness is such that it may require at minimum 1-day's travel, but perhaps in excess of 1 week's travel, to reach the nearest road and advanced medical care.

**Winter Helicopter Ice Climbing & Glacier Hiking** Each participant must: Fulfill all sections in 1, 2b, 2e, 3b.