

DO STABILITY TESTS INFLUENCE FORECASTERS' SLOPE STABILITY RATINGS? A case study supporting the application of snowpack stability tests



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Snow [stability](#) tests provide information about the likelihood of avalanching on slopes with a similar snow structure. They are especially important during times of conditional [stability](#), when avalanches or obvious signs of instability may be rare (LaChapelle, 1980). Avalanche forecasters use these tests to assess [stability](#) across a region, ski area, or transportation corridor, while recreational backcountry users typically use them for assessing slopes they want to ski or ride. Regardless of these differences, [stability](#) tests are invaluable for informing decisions for travelling in, or opening or closing, avalanche terrain. This study focuses on professional avalanche forecasters, showing that [stability](#) tests influence their slope [stability](#) ratings in nearly 30% of the tests. Our results show the importance of [stability](#) tests in professional decisions regarding avalanche conditions.

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