

Basic Mountaineering School

Dear Fellow CMC Member:

Thank you for your interest in the Denver Group Basic Mountaineering School (BMS). Attached are an information package and a BMS application form. The package should answer most of your questions and help you decide if you should make the commitment to take BMS this year. Please read it carefully before applying for BMS. If you choose to apply, please save this material for future reference.

To save time and avoid inconvenience, please make sure of the following before mailing your application:

- You meet the age and CMC membership requirements.
- You have achieved at least a Denver Group “C” hiker classification (refer to the CMC Member handbook for more information).
 - You must attach proof of your Denver hiker classification (e.g. your classification notification card) to your application.
 - In addition to the prerequisite of being a ‘C’ hiker, please note that preference will be given to applicants with significant Club involvement as volunteers.
- The application form is filled out completely and legibly.
- You have successfully completed Wilderness Trekking School, the Backpacking School or have a WTS waiver.
- Attach a copy of your graduation certificate, or other proof of completion.
- You have enclosed a check or money order for the full \$200 tuition fee (\$210 for non-Denver members) or filled out the credit card information on the application.

Failure to comply with any of these items will cause your application to be returned.

Most of the questions on the application are designed to help us assign people to groups. Please answer all questions as fully and honestly as possible.

Many people work very hard to make the Denver Basic Mountaineering School one of the best of its kind anywhere. I hope that you can take advantage of this fantastic opportunity.

Regards,
Deb Kirk
BMS Director, 2010

Colorado Mountain Club
Denver Group
Basic Mountaineering School
Informational Packet – 2010

The CMC Denver Group Basic Mountaineering School (BMS) is designed for those CMC members who already have hiking experience and want to get involved in advanced mountaineering (i.e. more difficult C and D hikes) and/or technical rock climbing. Beginning members with little or no hiking experience should take the Wilderness Trekking School (WTS) or Backpacking School (BKPS). WTS or BKPS is one of the prerequisites for BMS. BMS builds off the fundamentals taught in WTS and BKPS.

BMS provides instruction and practice in mountain route finding, navigation, survival, the basic skills and techniques of technical rock, snow, and peak climbing. The school will concentrate on Colorado conditions, but the concepts and skills learned will be applicable wherever you climb.

The emphasis of this school is on safety. Safety that the school teaches is based upon simplicity, redundancy and repetition. This is the most important aspect of climbing and mountaineering that the school teaches, so that you may acquire the foundation and basics for a long and enjoyable pursuit of mountaineering. BMS teaches mountaineering as a group experience, and the safety we teach is founded in the team. If your pursuit of mountaineering is geared towards solo climbing then this school is NOT for you. You will be taught to be a part of a team, and to function in any capacity as a team member.

The school consists of five evening lecture sessions, with six one-day weekend field trips. To qualify for a Certificate of Graduation you must:

- 1) Attend all lectures.
- 2) Successfully participate in all required field trips and display satisfactory proficiency in all exercises and/or climbs.
- 3) Successfully participate in a post-BMS, qualifying CMC-scheduled route finding trip.(minimum C hike)
- 4) Successfully participate in a qualifying CMC-scheduled high peak climb with an overnight camp (minimum D hike).
- 5) Pass weekly quizzes and a comprehensive written final examination.
- 6) Be recommended for graduation by your instructor.
- 7) Participate in any official volunteer trail building activity during or after BMS.

Admission to BMS is open to anyone who meets the following requirements and is 18 years of age or older:

- 1) Attends an orientation session for BMS in January, 2010
- 2) Current CMC membership (in any Group).

- 3) Possession of at least a Denver Group C hiking classification.
- 4) Prepayment of the \$200 tuition fee (\$210 for non-Denver members).
- 5) Successful completion of the Wilderness Trekking School, Backpacking School or obtains WTS or BKPS waiver.

Enrollment in BMS will be limited by the number of qualified instructors available, and by a low student to instructor ratio (2:1). If more people apply than we can accommodate, priority will be based on evaluation of the applicant's response of a complete and acceptable application and volunteer service to the CMC. The deadline for registration is February 19th, 2010. Applications will be evaluated and notice of acceptance, standby or rejection will be sent out after March 12, 2010.

The 2010 BMS Schedule is as follows:

January 19 (Tue) - BMS Orientation Meeting - AMC Auditorium, 7:00 p.m.

January 25 (Mon) - BMS Orientation Meeting - AMC Auditorium, 7:00 p.m.

February 19 - BMS Applications due in CMC Office

March 22 - First Lecture Night - AMC Auditorium, 7:00 p.m.

March 29 - Second Lecture Night - AMC Auditorium, 7:00 p.m.

April 3/4 - Navigation Field Trip (All Day)

April 5 - Third Lecture Night - AMC Auditorium, 7:00 p.m. (Knot test) *

April 12 - Fourth Lecture Night - AMC Auditorium, 7:00 p.m.

April 10 or 11 - 1st Rock Day (All Day)*

April 17 or 18 - 2nd Rock Day (All Day)*

April 19 - Fifth Lecture Night - AMC Auditorium, 7:00 p.m.

Apr 24 or 25 - Basic Snow Day (All Day)*

May 1 or 2 – 3rd Rock Day (All Day)

May 9 or 10 – Hard Snow Day (All Day)

May TBD - (If required) 3rd Rock Day Rain Day

Before July 1 – Successful Participation in CMC Qualifying Routefinding Trip (Moderate C minimum)**

Before Sept 30 – Successful Participation in CMC Qualifying High Peak Climb (Overnight D minimum)**

Before Sept 30 – Successful Participation in Trail Building outing

***Successful participation on these days is required for continuation in the school.**

***The Routefinding trip and the High Peak Climb are planned and coordinated by students and scheduled on line by a BMS-qualified Trip Leader. A successful routefinding trip must be completed by July 1st. A successful high peak climb must be completed by September 30th.**

The lectures will be held at the American Mountaineering Center Auditorium in Golden and will begin promptly at 7:00 p.m. Please arrive early and sign in and take the quiz beforehand to get credit for attendance.

Each instructor will be assigned to either a Saturday or Sunday, and each of the field trips for that instructor's class will be on that day. Please indicate on the application form whether you prefer a Saturday or Sunday field trip class. You are encouraged to check "Either". The School encourages development of self-sufficiency in the mountains. Nonetheless, we recognize that couples, friends or climbing partners may wish to be assigned to the same BMS group for reasons of convenience. Carefully consider these competing issues. If you decide that you would like to be assigned to a group with someone, please include that person's name on your application and the reason for your request.

Please remember that each instructor is making a substantial volunteer commitment of time and effort to make this quality school available to CMC members. As a student, your commitment can be no less. You must be willing to adjust your schedule to fit the school and your field group. There will be no guaranteed provisions for "make-ups". Any lecture, and up to two missed field trips, may be taken next year at no charge if necessary for graduation. Several field trips cannot be missed as they are prerequisites for later field trips. If you miss the first Rock Day, Second Rock Day or Basic Snow practice, you cannot continue in the school.

Acceptance Notification Policy

All applications received on or before the deadline will be responded to by mail in one of three ways:

- 1) Notice of acceptance.
- 2) Notice of stand-by status (pending availability).
- 3) Notice of rejection and refund of tuition.

Refund Policy

The Denver Council is responsible for determining the school tuition refund policy. Refunds (less a \$10 charge) will only be made if the request is made before the first class and a substitute can be found to take your place in the school. All requests for a refund must be made to the BMS Director. NO other requests will be honored.

Equipment

There are specific items that the student must have in order to participate in the technical climbing aspects of the field trips. These are in addition to the normal equipment for Colorado mountain travel that you learned about in Wilderness Trekking or Backpacking School (i.e. 10 essentials, wind and waterproof parka and pants, sturdy boots (no approach shoes or nylon/leather hikers), gaiters, backpack (at least 3,200 cu. in. or 52 liters), synthetic or wool clothing and gloves, headlamp, first aid kit, etc.)

A comprehensive list has been prepared to provide general guidelines (see below). It is not advisable, however, to purchase a lot of new gear and clothing before the school. The lectures and field trips will provide advice and substantial information about best choices and sources for obtaining the necessary items. We usually are able to obtain discounts from some mountaineering stores during the school. Your instructor is the best source of information for deciding on appropriate gear. You will be expected to own sturdy hiking/mountaineering boots (not trail shoes or light hiker boots) and a daypack with a capacity of at least 3,200 cubic inches (52 liters).

1 - Twenty-one (21) feet of 5 or 6mm nylon kernmantle “accessory cord.” Get the flexible kind (i.e. no Spectra, Gemini, Vectran or similar “chock cord” or cordelette cord). This will be used for knot-tying practice and will later be made into prusik slings. This should be cut into lengths of 5, 7, and 9 feet. Many stores will cut this for you. Approx. cost: \$6

2 - Twenty-six (26) feet of 1-inch tubular nylon webbing (not “Spectra,” “Dyneema™” or similar). This will be used for knot-tying practice and will later be made into webbing slings (two short and one long). This should be cut into the lengths of 8 feet (2 pieces) and 10 feet. Many stores will cut this for you. Approx. cost: \$6

3 - Climbing harness. Available at climbing and mountaineering stores. Some commercial harnesses available include those produced by Arc’teryx, Black Diamond, Metolius, REI, Singing Rock, Trango and Wild Country. The harness leg loops must be adjustable. Consult your instructor for opinions before you buy. Be sure you understand completely how to put it on and how to tie into it before you leave the store. Comfort is important, many stores will let you hang from the harness in the store to test for comfort. Approx. cost: \$30 - \$80

4 - Leather gloves. Best buy is work gloves with rough-out leather palms. They will be used for belaying and rappelling. Many climbing stores now sell commercial belay/rappel gloves, but these are more expensive. Attach loops so they can be clipped to your harness with a carabiner. Approx. cost: \$10 - \$30

5 - Non-locking Carabiners. Minimum of two (2) “D” or “asymmetric D” carabiners (straight gates only) are required. “Keylock” style (e.g. Petzl “Sprit” or Black Diamond “Positron”) is recommended but not required. These will be needed for assembling rappel

systems and for attaching to belay anchors. Approx. cost: \$12-15 Note: Although only 2 are required, you will probably want more than 2 non-locking carabiners in order to attach things like slings, gloves, etc. to your harness. 4-6 is probably a reasonable number to purchase with these other needs in mind.

6 - Locking Carabiners. Six (6) locking carabiners. Screw-gate and “key-lock” style strongly recommended (e.g. Black Diamond “Positron”). At least two (2) locking carabiners **MUST** be of the large, “pear-shape” or “H.M.S.” type (e.g. Petzl “William,” Kong “H.M.S.”, Mammut “HMS”, Omege “Jake” or similar).

7 - Belay/Rappel Device. Plate or tube type (e.g. Black Diamond ATC, Trango Jaws or B-52, Petzl Reverso, etc.). No Gri-Gri’s or Figure 8’s. Approx. cost: \$17 - \$20

8 - Helmet*. There are a number of good climbing helmets available for purchase. No bicycle or construction helmets are allowed. Approx. cost: \$60 - \$80

9 - Ice Axe*. Required for Basic Snow Practice, the High Peak Climb, Hard Snow Practice, and any other snow climbing done in the School. Wooden handle ice axes are not acceptable. Consult your instructors for length recommendation. Approx. cost: \$70 - \$100

10 - Crampons*. Required for Hard Snow Practice. Many quality crampons are available between \$100 and \$130. Step-in bindings are fastest and lightest, but require boots with toe and heel grooves. “New-matic” type bindings (front cage, rear bail) fit many types of boots but still require a pronounced heel welt or shelf on the boot. Bottom line is, take your boots when purchasing or fitting crampons.

* May be borrowed from the school with a deposit

The official text for BMS is *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills*, Seventh Edition, available from the CMC office or at most mountaineering stores in the Denver area.

Self-Evaluation for BMS Applicants

Successful and enjoyable participation in BMS requires good physical conditioning. Endurance is important. The following is a self-test to help you decide if you meet the requirements. Please be honest. This is for your use only.

1. Do you have a regular exercise program that includes strenuous aerobic activity (such as jogging, hard bicycling or swimming) that is sustained for at least half an hour and at least three times a week (ideally more)?
2. Can you maintain a hiking ascent rate of 800-1,000 ft/hr, at altitude, while carrying 30 – 40 pounds of clothing and equipment (the typical BMS pack weight including personal and group technical gear)?
3. During the past year have you completed at least one trip each month that is equivalent to a CMC difficult “C” hike, moderate snowshoe trip or a cross-country ski tour?
4. Are you willing to arrange your schedule to allow a full day for each field trip, even if it means leaving early in the morning and getting home late at night?
5. Can you maintain a positive outlook under adverse environmental conditions (e.g. wind, cold) and when challenged to stretch your “comfort zone?”

If your answer to all of these questions is “yes”, then BMS may be appropriate for you at this time. If not, you should seriously consider not taking BMS while you work on your physical conditioning and hiking abilities. You will get much more out of BMS next year when you are ready for it than you will this year if you’re not.

Please remember that an instructor may recommend dropping a student at any time for physical conditioning that is insufficient to meet the demands of the school. There will be no tuition refund in such a case. A positive mental attitude and willingness to accept instruction are important traits for any student.

If you have read and understood everything in this information package and still think that you would like to apply to BMS this year, please fill out the attached application form and send it with your tuition check to the CMC office. We look forward to having you as a student in the school and as a future hiking and climbing companion.

The BMS application form is attached.

Please contact Deb Kirk, at bmsdirector2010@gmail.com, if you have any questions.

E-mail queries are most likely to receive a timely response.