

Mt. Rainier: 6½ day Glacier Skills Seminar

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The Glacier Skills Seminar is International Mountain Guides' "high end" training program. It is designed as an in depth skills and training seminar for people with aspirations for more climbing in the future who want to spend a significant amount of time becoming familiar with these skills. This is excellent hands-on training to prepare for any of the big, high altitude, glaciated, technical peaks in Alaska, South America, the Himalayas and elsewhere, but is specifically focused on increasing alpine climbing skills in mid-summer conditions. The Seminar climbs the mountain in expedition fashion, working its way up the mountain from camp to camp, in order to eventually put the team in position to summit, and to familiarize you with the day to day fundamentals of expedition climbing. This program incorporates the Mountaineering Day School into the course curriculum and goes into greater detail teaching many other advanced climbing skills. Training and skills sessions include anchors, self and team crevasse rescue, ice climbing, route finding, glacier travel and fixed line ascension. The seminar is specifically scheduled for mid summer to capitalize on firmer snow conditions and more exposed crevasses for glacier training. The route of ascent will be the best late season choice while still avoiding most of the more well traveled parts of the normal route: via the Paradise and Cowlitz Glaciers to the vicinity of Camp Muir, with a high camp on the Ingraham Glacier. A summit attempt is included at the end of the seminar.

Why Choose This Program?

The Glacier Skills Seminar is our most in depth, hands-on training program and offers a generous amount of time to introduce you to and then increase your proficiency in critical alpine climbing skills. We delve into great detail during the training, lectures, and informal discussions in our small group to allow you to comprehensively understand the topics covered. This is an excellent program for anyone with the desire to increase their technical climbing skills in preparation for more challenging climbs. Unlike our summit climbs, this program is not solely focused on making it to the top. The primary goal is training in expedition climbing skills. At the end of the program we will climb to the summit as a team, utilizing all of the training we have learned during the seminar.

The Glacier Skills Seminar is a great way to immerse yourself in the alpine environment for an extended period of time and learn how expedition climbing works intimately through practical application. It will provide you with a unique opportunity to learn extensively from the first hand experience of our internationally renowned guide staff. The Glacier Skills Seminar is the right choice if you are serious about becoming proficient in climbing in order to use your skills on other challenging mountains.

Topics to be covered include:

- Cramponing
- Ice axe and ice tool use
- Ice climbing
- Belaying and rappelling
- Glacier travel and rescue
- Short roping and short pitching
- Ice and snow anchors and anchor systems
- Glacier route finding and navigation
- Ascending and descending fixed line

IMG provides breakfasts, dinners and hot drinks for the group on the mountain. We feel this adds a lot to the experience in terms of convenience, comfort and camaraderie. We provide all group gear including tents, stoves, cook gear, ropes and snow/ice anchors.

Our group size is never larger than twelve (8 climbers and 2 guides for the lower glacier training sessions, then 8 climbers and 4 guides for the last three days on the upper mountain).

Prerequisite:

There are no prerequisites for the Glacier Skills Seminar as the Mountaineering Day School is incorporated in to the course curriculum. All participants must arrive in excellent physical condition and come prepared to carry 50 lbs. or more.

Dates: June - August (Please see the IMG website for [specific, available dates.](#))

Expect to find firm snow and glacier ice conditions with well defined crevasses and a complex route to the summit. These are perfect conditions for maximum training in advanced ice axe and cramponing technique. The perfect seminar to prepare you for more technically challenging expeditions.

Landcost: \$2,482

Client to Guide Ratio: 4:1 training days on the lower glaciers (Days 1-3)
2:1 climbing days on the upper mountain (Days 4-6)

Trip Length: 6½ days

Itinerary

One fundamental aspect of all of IMG’s training seminars is that the itinerary varies from course to course. The guides will determine the exact route and camp placement prior to the seminar depending upon the weather, conditions, ability of the group, and skills they want to highlight. There is real opportunity to get away from the crowds and enjoy a unique experience on Mt. Rainier’s glaciers. The seminar progresses up the mountain moving from camp to camp, putting the team in position for a summit attempt at the end of the program. Most days will be centered on training and skill exercises, lectures, and informal discussions at camp, but camps will be moved to give participants hands on experience in establishing safe, sheltered and well constructed camps as well as experience in the day to day skills required for extended expedition camp life.

“IMG hooked it up big time with the food. They worked pretty hard to overcome our lack of appetite at elevation... Not what I expected, for sure. We had multiple hot, fresh meals, including burritos, pancakes and bacon, and pad thai...”

—Alecia H.

For more comments from IMG climbers, please see our website at: www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml

Typical Itinerary:

Day 1 – Meet at IMG Ashford Headquarters ([Directions](#)) at 2:00 p.m. This pre-climb meeting of 4-5 hours is instrumental in getting the team outfitted, informed, packed and educated prior to departure the following morning. Topics to be covered include an introduction of the entire team; an introduction to Mt. Rainier National Park, its mission and ecology; a safety briefing. Review personal clothing and equipment with discussion. Review group food and gear and sort loads. Practice specific knots useful for the seminar and construct prussik slings. Learn additional rope handling skills and belaying as time permits.

You are on your own for lodging this night, but IMG offers a convenient and economical option with our onsite [tent camping](#).

Day 2 – Meet at IMG Headquarters at 8:00 a.m. Load up the IMG van and depart for Paradise (5,400 ft.). The group will depart with full packs and all gear for the seminar, hiking to the lower part of the Paradise Glacier, typically located at an altitude of less than 7,000 feet. The team will learn to set up an expedition camp with tents and a cook kitchen. As time allows the group will practice basic glacier travel skills prior to dinner.

Day 3 – After an early breakfast, the team will continue skills training with ice axe and crampons in preparation for navigating higher up the glacier. The team will break camp and ascend the Paradise Glacier to a camp at an altitude below 9,000 feet. This camp will be situated to take maximum advantage of nearby crevasses for training.

Day 4 – A day of technical rescue training with self rescue and team rescue practice scenarios. Other skills may include snow and ice anchors, anchor systems, belaying, ascending and descending ropes. Return to camp at end of day.

Day 5 – Move to Camp Muir or the vicinity at 10,000 feet. Continued training in ice climbing, technical route finding and other glacier travel skills including short roping techniques.

Day 6 – Move to high camp at 11,000 feet on the Ingraham Glacier. Optional summit day today or early to bed in anticipation of a pre-dawn summit climb departure.

Day 7 – Summit day and then descent of the mountain to Paradise. During the descent the group will practice navigation including map and compass and gps. The party will hope to return to Ashford Headquarters between 2:00-4:00 p.m. but weather and route conditions may effect our return time.

“Just wanted to drop you all a line and tell you how much I enjoyed my trip with you. Everything was great including the weather. Your company is first class in all respects. I knew exactly what I needed to bring and rent. All of your staff that I met was friendly, helpful, knowledgeable, and I felt safe with them. The rental equipment was also high quality. The overall experience was fantastic. If I am able to go on another mountaineering trip, it will definitely be with IMG.”

—Jason S.

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