



Alpine Ice Climbing Seminars

California is well known for a sunny climate and fantastic rock climbing but less well known is its alpine ice climbing. In years of old it used to be that come late summer and fall the snows of the past winter melted off and we had a great fall ice season. Now climate has meant that the snow and ice just keep on melting, so we are undertaking these courses earlier in the year when we have better conditions. Success with this type of climbing requires proficiency with crampon and ice axe skills so the goal of this program is to introduce a variety of techniques and put them to use on some good climbs.

Itinerary: Day One: We will travel into the Treasure Lakes area out of the South Lake Trailhead west of Bishop. The approach to camp is about 3-4 hours and we will have time to set up camp and work on skills later that day.

Skills covered will include:

- Ascending and descending crampon techniques.
- French/flatfooting and American technique.
- Ice axe use
- Placing ice anchors
- Multi-pitch climbing skills and belay stance management
- Selection of equipment
- Belaying on snow and ice
- Hazard recognition and assessment

Day Two: We will get off to an early start and ascend Mt. Thompson. This ascent offers some six pitches on moderate snow and ice with the crux being passing a chockstone towards the top of the climb. Along the way we will work more upon skills and saving energy to prepare us for the longer climb on Mt. Gilbert.

Day Three: We head to Gilbert early in the morning since this will a long day. The approach is shorter than that to Thompson, but the ascent is steeper and often has hard water ice making proficiency and good tool placements a necessity. We intend to return to the trailhead late in the afternoon of day three.

Meeting place and time: We will meet the first day at 8.00 a.m. at the world headquarters of Sierra Mountain Center, 174 W. Line Street, in Bishop. Line Street is an east/west street marked by the southern-most traffic light on Main Street/Highway 395, in town. We're west of the light, on the south side of the street next to the health food store. A large parking lot is located on the south side of the building. We will meet for breakfast and will have a thorough pack check so don't plan on finalizing your packing until then.

Dates and Prices: Check the latest brochure, call us or go to our web site for dates and rates. Should minimum participant numbers not be reached you will be given the option of paying our private rate, rescheduling, or cancelling. Price includes guiding, permits, all necessary group climbing gear, tents, kitchen gear and breakfasts, lunches and dinners (you bring hot/cold drinks and snack items). Scheduled dates include USFS trail fees. Private programs do not.

Ratios: These are technical ascents and we undertake them at a maximum ratio of 1:2 for the harder Gilbert climb and 1:3 for the easier Mt. Thompson ascent.

Notes and other information: Guidebooks include Secor's "The High Sierra; Peaks, Passes and Trails", and "Sierra Classics" by Moynier and Fiddler

The best of course is "Eastern Sierra Ice" by SP Parker. Get it from Maximus Press. <http://www.maximuspress.com>)

We highly recommend that you spend at least one night at moderate altitude (higher than 8,000') just prior to the trip. Spending a night in Mammoth would do the trick or better yet, camped at an even higher trailhead, such as one of the campgrounds in Big Pine Creek for a night just before the trip. Glacier Lodge is also a good lodging option. Please refer to our Planning for Success info sheet for more info.

Prerequisites: You do not need to have climbed steep ice before but you need basic ice climbing skills combined with overnight backpacking experience with off trail travel.