

Avalanche Airbag 101

An avalanche airbag help can save your life by keeping you on the surface of the avalanche debris so you don't get buried. Research shows that airbags significantly improve the chances of surviving an avalanche than without one. Just pull the trigger and the airbag inflates from a compartment inside the backpack. As with all lifesaving devices, proper setup, maintenance and practice are crucial to ensuring optimum performance.

Setup.

Before heading out, always check the pressure in your cylinder. Any system can leak over time, so make sure it's at the pressure recommended by the manufacturer.

Make sure you check all the connections from the trigger to the cylinder and from the cylinder to the airbag. There are usually clear instructions inside the backpack.

Don't forget to use the leg loop included with your pack. This will prevent the pack from riding too high—or coming off completely—if you get caught.

Remember to keep the trigger handle accessible whenever you're anywhere near avalanche terrain.

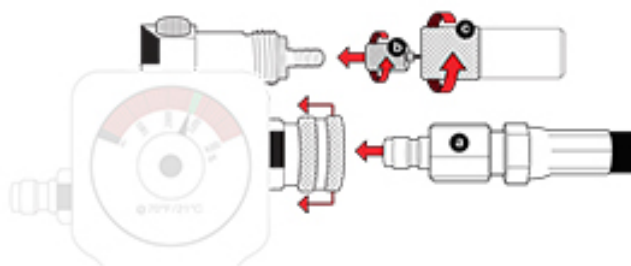
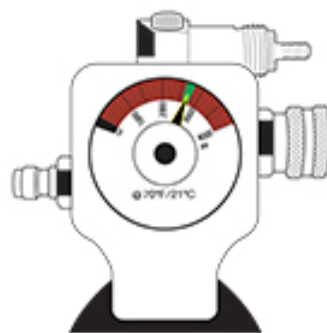
Practice.

Most manufacturers recommend that you test your airbag system at least once a year by deploying it at home. This will build confidence in your system and means you'll know exactly how hard to pull the trigger in a real incident. If your system is refillable, then do this at your local refill center for even more convenience.

Commercial Airline Travel.

Traveling with compressed gas cylinders is allowed in all countries but the U.S. If you're flying to or from the U.S., you'll need to travel with an empty cylinder. Simply do a practice deployment to discharge the cylinder, detach the head from the bottle, and carry the empty cylinder pieces on board with you (in case TSA wants to inspect it). Once near your destination, you can get a refill or an exchange at the local refill/exchange center. For a worldwide map of refill centers, check www.backcountryaccess.com/air.

If you're not flying to or from the U.S., advise your airline when you make your reservation that you plan to bring an avalanche airbag. Then make sure you check it through accompanied by the following document that can be downloaded at: <http://www.backcountryaccess.com/iata>



To find a cylinder refill or exchange location, check out www.backcountryaccess.com/air



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