

Avalanches in Newfoundland

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Avalanches are a major natural hazard in the mountainous areas of western Canada, but generally are not perceived to be a risk in Newfoundland. Archival research (a systematic examination of newspapers, government files and other sources) was undertaken to document geological hazards in Newfoundland. The results indicated that avalanches are a frequent occurrence in the province. The dangerous combination of high snowfall events, steep slopes, and residential areas at the base of such slopes has resulted in at

least 36 deaths over the last 150 years. Identification of this hazard has allowed a pro-active approach to be taken. The Eastern Canada Avalanche Project (ECAP) is an initiative of the Canadian Avalanche Association, based on the results of this research. And emphasizes avalanche awareness and training. In one case the archival research has led to installation of protective measures to control a severe, previously under-estimated, hazard.