**Three Kinds of Avalanches**

People like to enjoy the beauty of mountains. Mountains can also be dangerous place. Between 1950 and 2000, 447 people in the United States died in avalanches. There are three kinds of avalanches, some more dangerous than others, but all can happen without warning.

**Sluff**

A sluff is a powdery snow avalanche. This dry, top layer of snow comes loose and collects snow as it moves. It falls into a triangle shape. A sluff is usually not a threat to people

**Wet Snow Avalanche**

Since the snow is wetter and heavier than a sluff, a wet snow avalanche moves more slowly. This kind usually happens in early spring as the snow is beginning to thaw.

**Slab Avalanche**

Sometimes snow breaks off in a single large mass or slab. It breaks as it moves down the slope. This is the most dangerous kind of avalanche. The snow falls down the mountain in a big heavy slab that can bury buildings.