

The Mountaineers

Safety Committee Recommendations – 2010

Based upon review of submitted organization-wide incident reports for 2010, the Safety Committee has grouped mountaineers trip incidents into the following categories upon which safety recommendations are based. The below concepts and recommendations should be communicated to all activity committees and leaders and should be disseminated or made available for review by The Mountaineers community.

- LEADING ROCK
 - Lead within ability
 - Placing protection
- SLIPS TRIPS & FALLS
 - Slips and trips on non technical terrain are a major source of injury
 - Falls can result in small abrasions to broken ankles
 - Slips and falls can be avoided
- EQUIPMENT
 - Know how to use
 - Understand limitations
 - Batteries

LEADING ROCK

Students and new leaders should lead well within their ability, and sew up the route.

Lead within ability

- Students should practice well within their ability considering the risk of injury
 - Some students feel pressured to lead beyond their ability
 - While it can be good to work outside one's comfort zone, falling while leading can produce life changing injuries
 - Instructors and mentors should not place students in situations that are beyond the student's ability
- Students should do extensive practice where the result of a fall will have low probability of injury
 - Work into leading harder and harder routes
 - Confidence is built by successfully mastering the craft
 - Students and instructors that bull their way through without adequate technique will eventually suffer injury
 - Consider more formal training and practice sessions in our courses

Placing protection

- Emphasis should be made to sew up the route, particularly when starting out
- Folks don't realize the protection they placed will not keep them from decking out
 - Should safely retreat and put in more protection rather than powering through the move that would deck them out if they fall

SLIPS/TRIPS AND FALLS

Slipping and falling on the descent is a common occurrence and can result in severe injury

Slips and trips on non technical terrain are a major source of injury

- Slips and trips on trails are very common
- Special emphasis should be placed on the descent
 - Participants are tired
 - More likely to slip and trip going downhill
- Falls can result in injuries ranging from small abrasions up to broken ankles

Slips and falls can be avoided

- Bring awareness of the danger to participants
- Use trekking poles or similar equipment for stability
- Be aware of dangers of wet moss or wet rock when stepping on rock
- Be aware of wet logs or bark when stepping on logs

ELECTRONICS & EQUIPMENT

Electronic equipment has gotten better and less expensive so is used more often in the backcountry. Participants need to know how to use their equipment. Batteries should be kept warm.

Know how to use

- Just having the equipment will be of little use if one doesn't know how to use it
- Spend the time to really learn how to use the new equipment

Understand limitations

- Reliance on electronics can be a double edged sword, can get the team to perhaps take on more risk or push further.
- Fully understand the limitations of electronics.
- Teams relying on radios for contact should have a solid back up plan if the radios become unusable before or during emergency or planned transmissions

Batteries

- Batteries (primary & spares) need to be kept warm in winter or they will not hold power
- Batteries left in equipment and exposed to sub freezing weather will not hold a charge for long
- Take the batteries out of the equipment and keep them next to the body in extreme cold