

The Mountaineers Safety Committee Recommendations for 2013

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Content and organization

- Mission of The Mountaineers Safety Committee
- Recommendations
 - *All participants must communicate and participate within abilities*
 - *Leaders should cultivate an environment of engaging participants*
- For more information – additional resources

The purpose of the Safety Committee is to promote a culture of safety among The Mountaineers.

- Collect and report incidents and near misses
 - Thank you for sharing experiences!
- Educate and train or leaders
 - How can we avoid incidents in the future?
- We volunteer our time because safety is fundamental to what we do

Thanks to leaders and participants for reporting incidents!

- Kudos for taking the time to record your observations – they are valuable
- All Mountaineers learn through reading incident reports
- We need more reports, please!
- Kudos for how leaders and participants responded to incidents – our training works.

1. Skills and training

- Ice axe arrest skills still show up most frequently in field trip incidents. Committees, instructors, and participants should recognize this and assess how to avoid incidents.
- Slips on snow show up most frequently overall. Committees should ensure snow travel instruction not just covers proper use of crampons and ice axe, but provides equal treatment in teaching courses – with crampons on and with ice axes. We don't know of any slips on snow when crampons are worn.

1. Skills and training (cont'd)

- We need greater reporting on field trip incidents
- Ensure we teach water-centric first aid
- The Münter on Rappel can be configured to allow rope contact with the gate, unscrew the gate lock, and fail on rappel. Knowing that difference and having confidence in student uptake is what makes this an advanced skill. We advise climbers to exercise caution in using this in courses and treat this as an advanced skill, not a basic skill.

2A. Preparation for trips – leaders

- Watch for recurring destinations in the incident reports, like Guye Peak
- New leaders should be conservative in trip planning
- Leaders of programs including new participants should be conservative in trip planning
- Watch for overconfidence in newer participants

2A. Preparation for trips – leaders

- When setting an emergency time with your trip contacts, consider either late night or early morning, but not in the middle of the night. Overnight emergency times are hard to manage for contacts and for SAR.
- Consider greater use of "Leader Permission" for activities requiring greater than usual skill or conditioning.

2B. Preparation for trips – participants

- No trips or events are easy the way most people would define that. Don't be lulled into thinking lower-grade activities are easy.
- Participants really need to do a thorough self-assessment of their own health issues. Personal illness and conditioning shows up frequently in incident reports.
- Lasik surgery could be a risk factor.

3. During trips

- Watch for compounding issues that elevate risk – recognize these and discuss as a group.
- Beware peer pressure to go anyway when conditions change or the goal changes.
- Participants and leaders should have the option of backing off. There will be other opportunities.
- The leader, but also each participant, should have veto authority. Majority-rules votes may not be ideal.

4. When incidents happen

- When treating injured participants, err on the side of caution.
- Splitting groups increases risk.
- If someone is sick or injured and the leader decides it is safe and appropriate to split the group, at least two people should attend the injured.
- If there is another qualified leader who is willing to lead the remaining trip participants, then the original leader can assist the sick/injured party and the trip can continue. If not, the trip should turn around.

5. After trips

- Don't drive tired.
- In incident reports involving a slip on snow, leaders should indicate whether or not crampons were worn.
- Leaders please report anything that qualifies as a Major, Significant, or Minor incident or near miss.
- Call (206) 521-6030 right away for any major incidents – 911, emergency medicine, SAR
- Participants please participate in trip surveys.

Other recommendations

- Lodges and properties should consider AEDs; cost is about \$1000 each
- Change pass/fail in the trip credit listing on member's profiles to credit/no credit

For more information

- www.mountaineers.org
 - About Us – Safety
- www.mountaineers.org/safety/default.cfm
 - Annual safety reports (5 years)
 - Annual safety recommendations
 - Safety Highlights (5 to 10 per year)
- safety@mountaineers.org

Safety Highlights

Annual safety reports 1 – Incidents 2 – Recommendations

Safety

Charles Lozner photo
(The Enchantments)



Safety Committee Purposes

The purposes of the Safety Committee are to ensure that Mountaineers activities such as climbing, kayaking, and skiing have access to and follow current safety standards, to provide resources for education and training of our leaders and instructors, and to ensure that collection of data on accidents and near misses is performed, documented, maintained and distributed to our leaders. These purposes share the goal of enhancing a Club structure and culture of safety such that The Mountaineers continues to be recognized as a leader in safety for outdoor activities. (from [Board Policy 322](#))

Emergency contact procedures

First call 911, and ask to be transferred to the Sheriff of the county you are in (or National Park Service for Rainier, Olympics, & North Cascades) for a Search and Rescue (SAR).

Then call the The Mountaineers at (206) 521-6030.

[View or download the Mountaineers Emergency Contact Procedures](#) (PDF, 13kb)

[View or download the First Aid Report Form](#) (PDF, 173kb)

For questions or comments about the Safety Program, or to report any near miss or incident, please send an email to safety@mountaineers.org

Safety Information

[Safety Highlights](#) - Notes about Mountaineer incidents

Annual Safety Reports and Recommendations

[2011 Annual Safety Report](#)
(PDF, 117kb)

[2011 Safety Recommendations](#)
(PDF, 69kb)

[2010 Annual Safety Report](#)
(PDF, 114kb)

[2010 Safety Recommendations](#)
(PDF, 89kb)

[2009 Annual Safety Report](#)
(PDF, 144kb)

[2009 Safety Recommendations](#)
(PDF, 198kb)

[2008 Annual Safety Report](#)
(PDF, 96kb)

[2008 Safety Recommendations](#)
(PDF, 138kb)

[2007 Annual Safety Report](#)



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Safety Highlights



The Mountaineers - Safety Highlights Archive

- February 2014 [Backcountry Ski Self Rescue](#)
- January 2013 [Almost Toast? Munter Rappel Goes Bad](#)
- January 2013 [Concussed! Snow Falling From Cedars](#)
- December 2012 [Dragonair Peak Rescue Assist](#)
- December 2012 [Indoor Ice Climbing](#)
- November 2012 [Falling On Trail](#)
- October 2012 [Leader Fall](#)
- September 2012 [Glissade leads to Rescue](#)

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[Visit/Return To: Safety Highlights web page](#)

Safety Highlight – Concussed! Snow Falling From Cedars

Lessons from Mountaineer Incidents

Seattle Climbing and Seattle Safety committees are experimenting with raising awareness of safety issues that can arise on climbs, scrambles, backcountry skiing, and other Mountaineer activities. Previous Safety Highlights and other information are available on the [Safety Committee's web page](#).

Identifying information has been removed or disguised.

-- Dave Shema, Seattle Branch Safety Officer

Blows to the head can be very difficult to assess, especially in the backcountry. There may be few signs of injury.

Asking the right questions to learn of symptoms can be an art - head trauma patients may answer a specific question in the negative (e.g. "Did you see stars?") and be too disorientated to address the intent of the question.

The student involved in this incident provided some suggestions.

January, 21, 2012 - east side of the Gold Creek Winter Recreation Area, Snoqualmie Pass

Injuries: head trauma with possible concussion

Cause of Accident: Snow/ice falling from tree

We are all responsible for safety

The Mountaineers Safety Committee