2007 Accidents & Recommendations

Club-Wide Safety Committee

The Mountaineers
5 March 2008
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2007 Accident SUMMARY

• One **Major Incident** – Fatality on hike
  – **Definition**: SAR* and/or hospitalization
  – Down from nine in 2006 (page 23)

• 13 **Significant Incidents**
  – **Definition**: Injury & Dr. visit, but no SAR*
  – Not reported for 2006

• 37 **Minor Incidents**
  – **Definition**: Injury but no Dr. visit
  – Not reported for 2006

*SAR = Search and Rescue
Request of Trip Leaders

• Please use “Incident Reporting” section in Activity Report to document all incidents
  – As soon as possible after trip
  – Also include no-injury “near-misses”

• Any information is better than nothing
• This is principal source of information for our reports
• We will follow up if we need more
Major Incident

- Hike on Mt. Jupiter - July 14, 2007
- Fatality
- Cause: “Congenital Coronary Artery Hypoplasia”
Significant Incidents

• Injury and Dr. visit, but no SAR
• 13 incidents reported
  – 8 Slips/Falls on non technical terrain
  – 4 Falls on technical terrain
  – 1 Hit by falling rock/ice
• First year to report these
Significant Incidents (Cont.)

Serious injuries

- Tendon rupture
- Broken ankle (2)
- Broken thumb, concussion
- Broken wrist
- Cracked ribs
- Fractured shoulder
- Torn knee ligament
Significant Incidents (Cont.)

Four Significant Incidents occurred on Field Trips

- Basic Rock One
- Cragging Class
- Intermediate Ice One (2)
Significant Incidents Detail

1. Chair Peak/NE Buttress (winter)
   - Leader fall on ice pitch
   - Lip laceration, bruised & sprained ankle

2. Spire Rock - Basic Field Trip Rock 1
   - Flipped upside down while on rappel
   - Distal bicep tendon rupture, quadriceps strain, hyper-extended knee

3. Ingalls Peak/S Ridge
   - Fall in dark parking lot
   - Gash on forehead
4. **Icicle Canyon – Crag Class**
   - Leader fall on rock
   - Broken ankle

5. **Concord Tower**
   - Leader fall on rock, pro pulled out
   - Broken thumb, numerous bruises, minor concussion

6. **Mt Stuart/N Ridge**
   - Tripped while navigating boulders
   - Broken wrist
7. **Vesper**
   - Slipped on a rock
   - Gash on leg

8. **Mt Rainier/Emmons Glacier**
   - Fall on scree
   - Bruised or cracked ribs, scraped arm/back/leg

9. **Mt Maude/Entiat Icefall**
   - Hit by falling rock
   - Bruised shoulder, maybe hairline fracture
10. Mount Rainier/Nisqually Glacier - Intermediate Ice 1 Field Trip
   – Tripped & fell on low-angle glacier ice
   – Torn ligaments in knee

11. Mt. Baker/Coleman Glacier - Intermediate Ice 1 Field Trip
   – Caught crampon on sling while downclimbing
   – Broken ankle
12. **Sourdough Mtn**
   - Tripped while hiking
   - Sprained ankle

13. **Stevens Pass Backcountry**
   - Fall while skiing
   - Dislocated Shoulder
Minor Incidents

• Injury but no Dr. visit
• 37 incidents reported
  – 16 falls (10 on non-technical terrain)
  – 17 illness, hypothermia, conditioning
  – 2 hit by falling rock/ice
  – 2 warnings for route were reported
• Likely under-reported
• First time to report these
Recommendations SUMMARY

These areas need continued focus

• Group Dynamics
• Snow Travel
• Slips and Falls
• Technical ability
• Leader Expectations & Ongoing Training
Recommendations Discussion

• Recommendations are based on 2006 and 2007 accidents
• Too many to discuss in detail here
  – The important ones are given with the Crucial Ones highlighted
  – The Recommendations documents (see page 22) have more details on these plus numerous other Recommendations
Recommendations – Group Dynamics

• Party Separation is almost always risky
  – Keep party together

• Communicate expectations of leader/participants, esp. conditioning

• Leader must deal with unsafe party behavior

• Party Self-Evacuation should not risk further injury – patient is sometimes too eager to not be a burden
Recommendations – Snow Travel

• Give Self-Belay more emphasis
  – Self-Arrest gets almost all instruction time
• It is desperate & unreliable

• Emphasize Footwork, Self-Belay & Self-Arrest (in that order!)
  – The best way to stop a fall is to have no fall at all!

• Students learn techniques in soft-snow, but don’t know hard-snow technique
  – Add hard-snow instruction
Recommendations – Slips & Falls

• Be aware that non-technical terrain produces many accidents

• Low-angle hard-snow/ice is treacherous – slippery, can’t stop
  – Ax or anchor is essential

• Loose rock is an ever-present danger
  – Falling rock, kicking rock, pulling rock
Recommendations – Technical Ability

- Do not allow anyone to walk off a rappel whose anchor is at foot level

  - Learning to place pro
    - Lots of practice & use much pro
    - Cannot overemphasize this point

- Ice top-ropers should have at least one screw in case belayer is incapacitated
Recommendations – Leader Expectations & Ongoing Training

- Provide continued education for leaders
- Request leaders document all incidents, even if minor – for Club learning
More Information

Detailed Accident Reports & Recommendations for 2006 & 2007 are online: Board of Trustees/Archive/Safety Committee (right-click if in edit mode)

Contacts

For corrections, questions or comments on this document, contact Dan.Lauren@weyerhaeuser.com (Chair) John-Ohlson@comcast.net (Editor)
Appendix 1 -- 2006 Major Incidents
Snow Travel

- **Fall on snow w/ice ax - failure to arrest**
  1. Cracked pelvis & vertebrae - Crosby Mtn
  2. Lacerated knee, bruised ribs - The Brothers

- **Steep snow travel - w/o ice ax**
  3. Broken leg - McClellan Butte
  4. Lacerated head - High Priest

- **Other snow – Uncontrolled Glissade**
  5. Lacer. face, abdominal puncture - Red Mtn
Appendix 1-- 2006 Major Incidents
Rock Climbing

- **Leader Fall**
  6. Bruising, chipped vertebrae - Chair Peak

- **Unroped Fall**
  7. Possibly caused by stroke - broken leg, back, neck, fatality by blood clot 3 weeks later - Yellowjacket Tower
  8. Concussion, ankle and wrist injury - Lundin Peak
Appendix 1 -- 2006 Major Incidents

Other

- Party separation
  9. Solo unplanned bivy (2 nights)
     -- Hypothermia, dehydration and frostbite
     -- Muncaster Mountain
Appendix 2
Club Wide Safety Committee

- Reports to Board of Trustees
- Established after Sharkfin Tower Accident
- Fully active 2006 and 2007
Appendix 2 - Committee Purpose

• Promote a culture of safety among the Mountaineers:
  – Collect/report accidents and near-misses
  – Educate our leaders and instructors

• Ensure The Mountaineers are recognized as industry leaders in safety for outdoor activities.
Appendix 2 - Committee Charter

- Distribute safety knowledge
- Benchmark other safety programs
- Stimulate creation of Safety committees in all Branches
- Collect/distribute data on all risk activities
Appendix 2 - Committee Charter (Cont.)

• Standardize trip reporting
• Professionally investigate Major Incidents
• Assist in standards for leader qualification and continuing education
Appendix 2 - 2007 Committee Actions

• Systematically documented accidents
• Communicated accident facts to club members
• Facilitated discussion of accidents/safety
• Increased reporting of all incidents
• Met 12/1/07 to review incidents and develop recommendations