

2011 The Mountaineers Annual Safety Report

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Introduction:

The purpose of the Safety Committee is to promote a culture of safety among The Mountaineers. This is accomplished by:

- 1) The collection and reporting of accidents and near misses
- 2) Education & training of our leaders and instructors

The ongoing goal is to build structure around this culture of safety such that The Mountaineers continue to be recognized as industry leaders in safety for outdoor activities.

Functions of the committee (from the Charter):

- Collect, develop and distribute safety education and knowledge pertinent to each activity.
- Benchmark volunteer and professional organization safety programs and standards.
- Work to stimulate creation and maintenance of Safety committees within each Branch. Help to standardize and educate safety concepts and awareness at the branch and activity levels.
- Develop and perform standardized collection of data on at risk activities from all branches, via trip, accident, near miss, and other reports, and make this data available to all branches.
- Standardize trip reporting to collect information on routes, accidents, and near misses, and enhance systems to share this information.
- Ensure a thorough and professional accident investigation is performed for all fatalities and major accidents in a timely manner. This is coordinated through the Executive Director and may include outside and/or professional input.
- Assist in the development of standards for leader qualification and continuing education.

Safety committee goals for the year included:

- Collecting information on accidents and incidents in a systematic manner
- Writing up reports for major incidents in a systematic format
- Communicating summaries of facts from the accidents to members
- Facilitating discussion of accidents and safety measures among members
- Increasing reporting of all incidents, even those with less serious outcomes

The committee met on January 14, 2012 to review all submitted incidents for the year, develop recommendations, and discuss next steps.

Summary Statistics:

Major incidents involving Search and Rescue, 911 call, and/or hospitalization

There were six major incidents reported:

1. Broken Leg (SAR) – Snoqualmie Property, January 2, 2011
2. Fatality (SAR) – Snoqualmie Property, February 19, 2011
3. Cut above eye (911) – Milan Italy, March 5, 2011
4. Broken Hip (SAR) - Andermatt Switzerland, March 15, 2011
5. Broken Foot (SAR) – The Tooth, August 20, 2011
6. Broken Leg (SAR) – Mixup Peak, August 25, 2011

Significant incidents involving injury and Dr. visit, but no SAR or 911 call

There were twelve significant incidents reported which resulted in the following injuries:

- Broken rib
- Dislocated shoulder
- Punctured arm
- Twisted knee
- Burn (by hot water)
- Cut hand
- Lacerations around eye
- Bruised knee
- Bruised ribs
- Cut finger
- Sprained ankle
- Strained ankle

These significant incidents were categorized as:

- Slip/Trip/Fall on non technical terrain – 6
- Fall on rock (roped) – 2
- Burn – 1
- Cut by equipment – 1
- Illness – Knees/ankles – 2

None of these significant incidents occurred on an organized field trip.

Minor incidents reported where no Dr. visit occurred

There were eighty minor incident reports made, categorized as:

Fall - 30

- Fall on non technical terrain – 18
- Fall on rock (roped) – 3
- Fall on snow – 9

Hit/Cut - 7

- Cut by equipment – 3
- Hit/cut by natural object – 4

Illness - 15

- Blisters - 2
- Feeling weak – 1
- Heat exhaustion – 3
- Knees / ankles– 3
- Other illness - 2
- Previous injury - 4

Kayaking – 1

- Kayaking other – 1

Logistics – 17

- Helping another party - 4
- Party organization – 10
- Party separation – 3

Preparation - 2

- Conditioning – 2

Other - 8

- Informational – 8

Major Incident Report Summaries:

January 2, 2011 – Snoqualmie Property

Injuries: Broken leg

Cause of Accident: Foot caught in snow while sledding in play area, twisting and breaking leg.

Summary:

On January 2, 2011, SN was sledding in the snow play area on the Snoqualmie Pass property with her daughter when her foot caught the snow, twisting and breaking her leg. She was evacuated to the hospital and treated for the fracture.

February 19, 2011 – Snoqualmie Property

Injuries: Fatality

Cause of Accident: Uncontrolled slide from property access road onto SR 906, run over by passing car

Summary:

The following summary is a compilation of direct quotes from the Washington State Patrol investigation report, case 11-002865, and various witness statements.

On February 19, 2011, DE and his family drove to Snoqualmie Pass in search of a snow play area. His family had never been sledding or played in the snow before. He stopped by the Fred Meyer store in Covington and bought a green plastic sled. While driving by The Mountaineers property, he noticed the sign advertising snow play was available. He

parked their van, paid the \$25 fee, signed the waiver statements, received verbal and written instructions on property rules, which included instructions that sliding was limited to the groomed area within the property and not allowed on the access road.

At 2:20pm, DE's seven year old son JE followed his father walking up the access road. JE was smaller than average for his age, had surgery in November for a heart murmur and tired easily. DE was dragging the empty sled behind him up the hill when JE suddenly jumped on the sled. The rope jerked taut and came out of DE's hand, DE stepped on the rope but the knot untied or unraveled and the rope detached from the sled. The sled started sliding backwards picking up speed with JE sitting upright and facing uphill. When the sled reached the road (SR 906), JE was ejected from the sled and was run over by a passing car. He was immediately given CPR and a number of emergency personnel quickly arrived on the scene. He was airlifted to Harborview where resuscitation continued until time of death was recorded at 4pm.

March 5, 2011 – Milan Italy

Injuries: Cut to bone above right eye

Cause of Accident: Tripping on a small step and fell

Summary:

On March 5, 2011, PP, who was on an organized foreign outing, tripped on a small step while walking to answer the phone in her hotel room, fell and suffered a cut that went clear to the bone above the right eye. She was evacuated by ambulance to the local hospital for treatment which included stitches to the wound and observation for concussion.

March 15, 2011 – Andermatt Switzerland

Injuries: Spiral fracture of her right femur

Cause of Accident: Telemark skis hit a heavy clump of snow while skiing

Summary:

On March 15, 2011, a group of skiers on a foreign expedition was skiing at the Andermatt, Switzerland ski area. On the first run of the day, near the bottom of the lift, GM hit a hard clump of heavy snow with her telemark skis, which resulted in a spiral fracture of her right femur. She was airlifted to the local hospital where she had surgery. She was in the hospital 4 days.

August 20, 2011 – The Tooth

Injuries: Broken foot

Cause of Accident: Leader fall while leading on rock

Summary:

On August 20, 2011, a party of 3 set out to climb the SW Face of The Tooth, a standard intermediate route. The climb of the intermediate section was uneventful and the party hooked up with the basic route just below the catwalk. ML decided to climb the face between the catwalk and rappel route, his reasoning being he had already led both of those pitches previously and wanted to try something different. ML had climbed to within a move or two of topping out when he fell. ML stated that his right arm pumped out quickly and unexpectedly. Before he could adjust his feet he lost his grip and “barn doored off”. ML was between 8 and 10 feet above his last piece which was a nut, he fell feet first and landed on a small ledge with his left foot which turned him upside down. He did not ground on the ledge below the catwalk. His protection held. ML righted himself, set up an anchor and belayed the other two members up to his location on the flat spot below the catwalk. A standard MOFA response revealed an ankle injury that could not bear weight. ML fell at 1:40pm. A 911 call was placed at 2:30pm requesting an evacuation. The weather was good, and a helicopter evacuation was completed at 5:00pm. ML suffered two fractures in his foot, bone bruising in the foot and a lot of soft tissue damage, but did not need surgery.

August 25, 2011 – Mixup Peak**Injuries:** Broken leg**Cause of Accident:** Leader fall while leading on rock**Summary:**

On August 25, 2011, a party of 6 set out to climb the basic rock route on Mixup Peak. LW was leading the pitch and standing on a small ledge when the rock he was standing on gave way. As LW fell, his last piece of protection fell with the loose rock section. His second piece held his fall. The belayer did not immediately know a fall was occurring and did not quickly brake the fall. When the belay was applied and all was settled, a leader fall of 80’ occurred. LW hit his head during the fall and cracked his helmet, and he suffered a broken left leg below the knee. After an initial MOFA response, three members of the party were left with LW and two others walked out until phone service was available. 911 was called, and a rescue was initiated. After an overnight stay, a helicopter evacuation was conducted the next morning and LW was taken to Harborview where he had two surgeries to repair his broken leg.

Summary of Significant Incidents**(No SAR or overnight hospital stay, but injury or Dr. visit)**

Location: Foreign Outings – Milan Italy**Date:** March 3, 2011**Injuries:** Broken rib**Cause of Accident:** Fall when train jerked upon starting up

On the train ride back to Milan, Italy, JL fell against a train seat when the train jerked while starting up and broke a rib.

Location: Joshua Tree outing

Date: March 15, 2011

Injuries: Dislocated shoulder

Cause of Accident: Aggravated previous injury

We had a dislocated shoulder which resulted in ~15' leader fall. 2 basic grads with quite a bit of additional experience did an outstanding SPSR (2 lowers after assessment). After 2 attempts to reduce at base of 2nd pitch and one at campsite they drove subject to high dessert medical center. 2 attempts at reducing in the ER before sedation and many after sedation, were unsuccessful. Reduction was successfully with 'Surgery' (closed) under general anesthesia 19 hours after incident.

Location: Seattle Program Center

Date: April 15, 2011

Injuries: Punctured Arm

Cause of Accident: Leader fall on practice ice wall, punctured arm with ice tool

Two guys, CF and BD, both members of the mountaineers came to use the ice wall last night at the Program Center during open climb night. CF was going to show his friend how to use the wall and tools. They geared up and since BD was new to the sport I decided to stand next to him to make sure he was good on the belay and give him tips on how to use his crampons and tools in the wall as CF was climbing. CF mounted the right side slanting wall and climbed without issue to the vertical portion of the wall and began climbing the vertical wall. He made about 3 moves and then fell off the wall. BD caught him without issue but CF started to bleed profusely. First aid materials were found and compression applied. Since the puncture was so deep they decided to drive to the hospital for stitches. Appeared the ice tool punctured the inside left forearm and hit a vein.

Location: Mt. Baring

Date: May 20, 2011

Injuries: Twisted knee

Cause of Accident: Twisted knee on descent

Individual twisted knee while descending ridge to saddle. Had on crampons; snow inconsistent. Other party members took some gear. He was going to see physician upon return.

Location: Waltz Building, Everett

Date: May 22, 2011

Injuries: Burned by hot water

Cause of Accident: Coffee pot holding hot water vibrated off counter ledge and spilled on victim

The Everett branch lookout/trail maintenance committee was holding a fundraising show at the Waltz Building in downtown Everett. Between shows, KR was burned by hot water when the 25 cut coffee pot tipped over. Apparently the coffee pot walked off the counter ledge by the vibrations of the nearby door being open and shut repeatedly. The hot water soaked much of the front of her body. KR took off her sweater and saw she was scalded on one arm, but thought she was in pretty good shape. She declined putting cold water or ice on the area. She continued to support the second show and even went out to dinner afterwards. Around 11pm, KR complained of blisters forming, went to the Dr. the next day and found the burn to be bigger and deeper than first thought. The burn was wrapped, medicine applied, and KR told to stay home from work for a few days so the blisters didn't become infected.

Location: Ira Spring Trail

Date: June 4, 2011

Injuries: Cut hand

Cause of Accident: Trip

NV tripped and fell on her right hand. The result was a 3/4 inch cut which was irrigated and closed up with surgistrips and a pressure bandage was applied. When she returned to Seattle she went to a hospital to have the wound stitched up.

Location: Sahale Peak/Quien Sabe Glacier

Date: June 24, 2011

Injuries: Lacerations around eye

Cause of Accident: Fall into creek

During the approach to Sahale, LH slipped and fell during a stream crossing between Midas and Morning Star creek. She slipped and hit her face on the rock in the creek, hitting just under the right eye. There were small laceration and swelling around the area and right eye. She had a headache, slight dizziness, and swelling. I called the climb and went back to the cars. I took her to the hospital for medical evaluation. Contacted her the next day and there was no fractures or head injury. She will have a nasty black eye.

Location: Ingalls Peak/S Ridge

Date: June 25, 2011

Injuries: Bruised knee

Cause of Accident: Fall on trail

On the hike down one of our party slipped on the trail and banged her knee on a rock. After we examined her it was determined that she could walk with mild discomfort. There was a small wound which was cleaned and bandaged. Ace bandage was applied for support, and her pack was divided among others, and she was able to walk the remaining mile to the car. Her knee was stiff and sore, had a Dr. appointment for the next day.

Location: Cutthroat Peak/W Ridge

Date: July 9, 2011

Injuries: Bruised ribs

Cause of Accident: Fall moving from snow to rock

A basic student was injured on our climb of Cutthroat this past Saturday. RA fell several feet moving from snow to rock with aluminum crampons on, bounced off the rock and landed on the lip of a moat, falling perhaps 5-8 feet landing on her chest, taking her wind away. She was shaken, but seemed fine at the time. Apparently, she cracked a rib and sprained her ankle. At the time she said she was fine. I assume the ankle got worse during the course of the climb as it was a long one. The rib didn't seem to be a factor during the rest of the climb. She went to the doctor this morning and got the news. She was told to rest and it would fix itself.

Location: Dip Top

Date: August 5, 2011

Injuries: Cut finger

Cause of Accident: Slip and fall on trail

After summiting, we were following the rough fisherman's trail back to camp, when I slipped and got a fairly bad laceration across the back of one finger. Everyone else did a good job of helping me out with this; we irrigated the wound and patched it up. I went to the emergency room when we got home, and am now taking antibiotics just in case, but there should be no lasting damage. This is my worst injury on a Mountaineer's trip, and a good reminder to concentrate even on what seems to be very benign terrain.

Location: Tubal Caine Mine - Buckhorn Lake

Date: August 13, 2011

Injuries: Sprained ankle

Cause of Accident: Awkward step

One participant took an awkward step and injured his ankle. He immediately took ibuprofen and considered taking his boot off to let it sit in some cold running water, but decided against it. He rested for about five minutes and continued on -- he was slow but managed the 1.5 miles back to the cars. He had an ice pack in the car and applied it immediately. When we got back to the Park & Ride the ankle was swollen but walkable.

Follow-up: Unfortunately I went to Urgent Care today and they diagnosed it as a severe sprain and put me in the boot for up to 6 weeks until it heals. It seems like they are giving me the same treatment as if I had broken it.

Location: Slippery Slab Tower/NE Face

Date: September 2, 2011

Injuries: Strained ankle

Cause of Accident: Leader Fall

Lead climber took a leader fall when a handhold broke off. Climber was about 5 feet above last protection (a slung tree). Climber fell 15 - 30 feet (we didn't measure. I thought it was more like 15, but climber felt it was a larger fall). Climber was scraped and bruised on the right hand side of her body. More serious, the climber suffered a sprained ankle. Visited the Dr. next day and found ankle strained only.

See the document “**2011 The Mountaineers Minor Incidents Report**” for the text of the minor incidents reported (those details are too lengthy to place in the main report).