



# Denver Leader Safety

*The Safety Letter for Denver Leaders of the Colorado Mountain Club*

[www.hikingdenver.net](http://www.hikingdenver.net)

[www.cmc.org](http://www.cmc.org)

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Welcome to your Safety & Leadership's first Safety Newsletter. Every other month, we will issue a newsletter that will include an incident scenario and safety tips. We will try to provide scenarios that are both interesting and have good educational value. For this reason, they will not always be exclusive to the CMC. We hope you find them interesting and helpful. If you have any comments or suggestions, please feel free to contact me, Deb Robak, [kaborbed@comcast.net](mailto:kaborbed@comcast.net)



Injury on Jones Pass:



Two people were skiing down Jones Pass Rd. when one fell on a steep rutted part of the trail. He was in the middle of the road, immediately after a blind curve. He couldn't move so the main concern was that he would get hit by snowmobilers which the pair had seen earlier. The other skier went above to ward off snowmobilers. She also set up crossed skis on the road to warn of the hazard. Cell phones did not work in that area. Fortunately it was a warm day and the injured skier was in the sun. Within 20 minutes a snowmobiler came by and went to the base for help. A tele-skier, who happened to be an ER physician, came back with the snowmobiler to aid the victim. He placed a barrier under the victim to prevent hypothermia. A snow cat arrived an hour later but ultimately flight for life evacuated him 2 ½ hrs. after the accident. He suffered a broken leg and hip.

What went right – "I didn't panic and had a plan."

What went wrong – "We should have had another person or two in the group to go for help." (They did select a well traveled route, however.)

#### Suggestions:

- Maintain heat – try to place extra clothes under and around victim.
  - Call 911 on a cell phone – you may get through even though you cannot make a regular call.
  - What if help never came? The accident happened at 1:15p. If help cannot be found, you should consider starting your emergency shelter by 3p.
  - In addition to the 10 essentials, winter travel requires extra items such as a tarp that can double as shelter, litter, aerial signal, etc. Other items include hand warmers, extra socks (can double as gloves), extra layers, matches/fire starter, metal cup (to melt snow), shovel, etc.
  - Warning options – pine boughs, poles, skis crossed
  - Splint? – Immobilize the fracture before any movement is attempted and without any change in position. If the bone is in an unnatural position, do not try to straighten it. Do not try to move the victim unless in a dangerous area.
  - If you are traveling alone or with limited numbers and in remote areas, consider a Spot Locator.
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## Avalanche Safety

Check out this site, along with their links, for a refresher on avalanche safety: [http://dola.colorado.gov/dem/public\\_information/avalanche.htm](http://dola.colorado.gov/dem/public_information/avalanche.htm)

As a leader, we can provide valuable information for our group. Please teach our members about avalanche safety, when leading winter trips.

- Always check the CAIC avalanche report the morning of the trip. In fact, it is of great educational value to read it daily. There are often photos of slide areas, surface hoar, etc.
- Increased risk considerations: **Terrain:** Slopes 20 deg or higher (highest risk 38 degrees), cornices, gullies, etc. **Snowpack:** new snow on top of surface crust. **Weather:** wind load/lee slopes, sudden change in temp., amount and intensity of precipitation.
- Point out the hazards to the group, such as avalanche paths and runouts. You only need 10 meters of open area to slide. There was a report of an avalanche near the Ruby Gulch gate, on Woods Creek Road. Most of us have passed this spot and never gave it a thought considering it is only a 28 degree slope and close to the road/parking area.
- Show members how to safely cross avalanche paths one by one. Tell them how to spot the person crossing. Don't forget the last person. Show them how to safely skirt around these paths.
- Demonstrate a slope meter. You can make your own at no cost by cutting a rectangle out of heavy clear plastic, like the kind you can never get off the annoying electronic packaging. Draw a horizontal line with a permanent marker. Add the angle of 20, 25, 30, 35, 45 degrees. Prime danger angles tend to be 30-45 degrees (mark those with a red marker). You can now easily hold it up, look through it, and judge the angle of your slope. Laminate for extra protection.
- Check your route on a topo map to determine slope angles and slope directions. Compare this with the CAIC rose. Google map is a very useful tool in spotting the pockets of avalanche terrain that a topo map may not.

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I stole this off the internet: The armed forces survival instructors use the rule of 3's when teaching survival.

You can survive:

3 weeks without food

3 days without water

3 hours without shelter

3 minutes without air

But not 3 seconds without hope.