



# 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)

March 2012

## SAVE THE DATE



- What:** Leader Skills Day & Happy Hour  
**When:** April 1, 2012 (Sunday)  
**Where:** AMC – Conference Rooms A, B, C, D  
**Who:** Trip leaders, Instructors, Graduates of TLS.  
**Happy Hour:** To follow presentations  
**Cost:** Free

Skills Day is a program far different from ones we've offered in the past. Our goal is to offer learning opportunities to our leaders. We will have one speaker in each of the conference rooms. You will have a choice of attending three out of four talks. There will be two presentations on Safety Skills and two on Leadership Skills. It is a pilot program so your attendance and feedback will be critical to its success. Sign-up online and select the 3 presentations you would like to attend.

---

**Centennial Celebration:** 14er climb update...32 leaders have stepped up to lead 14ers on September 8...THANK YOU! Our goal is to have 100 leaders (for our 100th, of course) leading teams on the 14ers. For more info, visit the CMC home page and click on Centennial Celebration Series/ 14er Climbs. (see announcements)

---

**Backcountry Incident Review Conference:** March 10, 2012. The conference runs 9 am – 5 pm., at the CMC. Lunch will be served. Admission is \$30 for non-members. Seating is limited; early registration is encouraged. To register, go to [cmc.org/BIRC](http://cmc.org/BIRC). The agenda features four compelling accounts of backcountry tragedy and heroism. The keynote speaker will be world-renowned mountain climber Susan Ershler.

## Heart Attack in the Wilderness



On Saturday, September 13, 2008, a CMC trip of four participants set out to explore and take GPS readings of social trails in the Rampart East Roadless Area in the Pike National Forest, just southeast of Devil's Head, as part of a Denver Group Conservation Committee project. We hit the trailhead about 10:00 am under blue skies with temps about 60 degrees. We planned on hiking in some rolling terrain for about 3 miles and then descend to the plains.

As we hiked through terrain that I was familiar with I had a discussion with Grover Cleveland about his heart health and how he had been concerned about his heart and had been to the doctor two years before hand to have it checked. His doctor had given him a clean bill of health. He felt some discomfort in his left shoulder from an injury earlier in the year but he was confused as to whether or not it might be an indication of heart problems. Grover did not have family history of heart problems and his cholesterol readings were OK. This topic was of interest to me because of my

family history of high cholesterol and heart problems. After a short break at our high point we descended 1,500 feet on a steep unfamiliar social trail on a ridge that led to the western edge of the prairie in Douglas County.

After wandering around a bit, we started back up the ridge that we had just come down. I noticed that Grover was slowing down. As we ascended, he got progressively slower and seemed to have a harder time recovering his breath and energy during breaks. He also needed more water and had to borrow some from other hikers. Grover at the time was feeling a little guilty about slowing down the group. Towards the top of the ridge, at about 5:00 pm, Grover said that he could no longer hike and that he thought he was having a heart attack. He later described the feeling as having a knife stuck in his heart and he knew it was a heart attack.

Once we knew what Grover's problem was we went into first aid mode. I tried to make Grover as comfortable as possible - he was in obvious pain as he lay writhing and groaning on the ground. Although Grover was in considerable pain he never lost consciousness and even had the where with all to ask for a helicopter to evacuate him. In the meantime, Claude Newman, the co-leader of the hike, called 911 and alerted them to our GPS coordinates. Bruce Harrington, our fourth hiker, checked the area for possible helicopter landing sites.

It was determined that there was no suitable landing sites for a copter so Search & Rescue sent a small advance group to meet us. Because the area is fairly remote and has no official trails it was determined that I would go out to meet the Search & Rescue group because I knew the area better. Claude and Bruce would care for Grover.

I left all my first aid gear and extra clothes with Claude and Bruce as Grover spoke of being cold and it was starting to get cool and darker. In my absence the main medical challenge was to keep Grover as warm as possible and Claude and Bruce

did an excellent job by using space blankets, a bivey sack and extra clothes. They also laid next to him to keep him warm as possible. Grover was communicating the entire time and his main issue was staying warm.

I returned with the advance party of three first responders from Search & Rescue around 8:00 - 8:30 at which point they took over the first aid effort. At about 9:00, twelve more Search & Rescue members came to put Grover on stretcher buggy. We left the incident site about 9:30 and got to the dirt road and an ambulance about 2:00am. All eighteen people were needed to get Grover and the gear to the ambulance. Grover was taken to

the hospital where he received treatment for his heart condition. Grover has recovered and continues to hike with the CMC.

What we learned:

- Bring a cell phone
- Take vital signs & notes of patient's condition
- Bring extra water
- Bivey sack is better than a space blanket
- Hike with 3 other hikers
- Have extra flashlight

Written by Phil Kummer



Signs of a Heart Attack – may include one or more of the following:

- Pain or pressure in the chest. Some describe a crushing or squeezing sensation. This pain may radiate to one or both arms, neck, back or jaw.
- Pain or discomfort in arm(s), neck, back, or jaw.
- Sweating, nausea &/or vomiting, or shortness of breath.
- Light-headedness or fainting.
- A strong sense of impending doom.
- Overwhelming fatigue.
- Feeling of being cold and the inability to warm up.
- Note: Symptoms such as dizziness, cold, rapid heart rate, etc. can be indicative of high altitude, hypothermia, exhaustion, etc. Often times these are gray areas in which you should err on the side of caution.

Signs that may distinguish chest pain from indigestion:

- Pain after meals and not related to exertion.
- Made worse by coffee, tea, spicy foods, or alcohol

- If no relief after 1-2 hrs, assume the condition is more serious than indigestion.
- If walking or exertion makes it worse, assume heart attack.

What to do:

- Have the victim lie down. Keep him calm and warm.
- Check their vital signs.
- Ask about their medical history.
- Ask if they take nitroglycerin. Use as directed.
  - Common directions: Tablet form: Let on tablet dissolve under the tongue. If pain continues repeat dose twice at three minute intervals.
  - If the pain stops within 15 minutes, it's probably angina (heart pain). If it continues suspect a heart attack.
  - When taking nitro, make sure the victim is at least sitting down as this can cause a drop in blood pressure resulting in light-headedness.
  - If it proves to be angina that is resolved with nitro, the victim may be able to walk out of the

wilderness providing he has no further pain. This has to be given careful thought however.

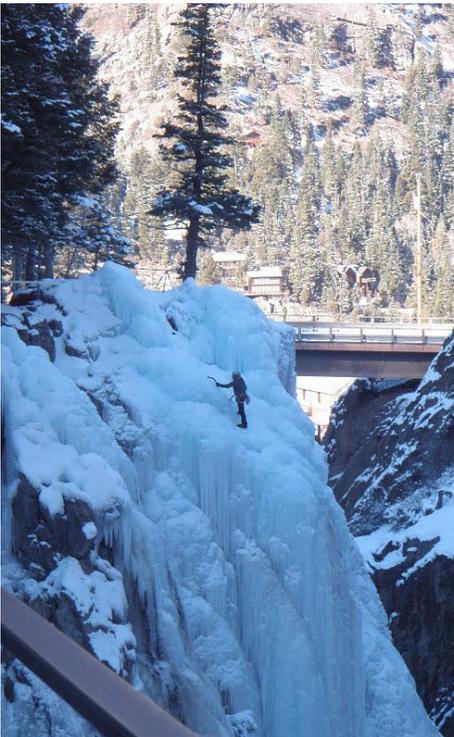
- Suggest aspirin. Chewable aspirin 325mg is absorbed the fastest. If it is a regular aspirin or equivalent to 3 baby aspirin, have them chew it before swallowing.
- Limit eating and drinking other than water.
- Keep in mind; people (esp. CMcer's) have a tendency to minimize their pain and symptoms.
- Get help. Call 911. If there is no cell reception or no one has a SPOT locator, send the strongest and quickest hikers, preferably 3, to get help. Remember you may still be able to call 911 despite not having cell reception.
- When to let them walk out? In general, very rarely.
- What to do when 6 miles from the trailhead, no way to call for help, you're alone with the victim, and he is

obviously having a heart attack? Your choices are limited, of course, but the main point is to get help quick. Hike out quickly to get help.

- CPR: Make sure the only person that knows CPR isn't the one running off to get help! Follow the protocols for the ABC's/CPR. The virtues of CPR may be over rated in the wilderness. Survival statistics are bleak but once CPR is started, you're obliged to continue until vital signs are restored or you can no longer physically perform.
- **Attend the CPR presentation at the Leader Skills Day**

**\*\*\*Very Important Note:** As in any case, when a person is feeling ill and decides to go back to the trailhead, always send at least 2 other people with that person; one to stay with that person if they deteriorate (unable to go on) and the other to continue on to seek help.

## Attention Climbers



Recently my climbing partner

broke her arm while down climbing the gully leading to the School Room in Ouray Ice Park. Her fall from the fixed line was dramatic and looked as if it could have been catastrophic. The gully we had to down climb was a mix of wet rock, snow and ice. It is steep, narrow and treacherous. To aid climbers there are two fixed ropes, one from the top of the gully to a point where there is a stair like series of two nearly vertical drop offs. Here climbers transition 90 degrees to another fixed rope that leads to a wider lower angled bottom slope. The beginning of the transition is awkward as you

have to maneuver around the tree, anchoring one end of the fixed rope while you down climb ice. The rope is not taut and swayed causing her gloved hands to slip off the rope. She called out, "Ken, I'm falling." I watched in disbelief as she fell backwards landing on her pack and hitting her helmeted head on the iced up rock. At this point she began to slide and went over a vertical rock band about 10 feet high. She flipped in mid air and landed in the shallow snow pack below. When I reached her, she was alert and most likely in a mild state of shock. I asked her if she was all right and she

responded that she was okay except for her right arm. Two climbers rushed to our aide. They were godsends and lent aid in the finest traditions of mountaineering. Fortunately, one was a medical doctor. He assumed command of the medical evaluation. Keeping her motionless he performed a head to toe assessment. Finding no injuries other than the right arm and using me as his aide, he immobilized the arm with a stick and tape splint. With our help she clipped into the fixed rope and with only her left hand, she

managed to climb out of the gully. I took her to the hospital in Montrose where she was diagnosed with a non-displaced fracture of the radial head. She is healing well and should be able to drive in 4 weeks and resume climbing in 10 to 12 weeks.

Lessons Learned. Clip into fixed ropes when available. There was only a 4 to 6 foot stretch on this down climb where a fall or a slip would result in a nasty slide over a vertical rock band. My partner was very close to being in the safe zone when she lost her grip on the rope.

Always wear a helmet when climbing. Carry a well equipped first aid kit and know how to use it. We had two great kits but I had left my Sam Splint at home. Be prepared to improvise. The fact my partner was wearing a back pack and a helmet protected her head and spine in this fall.

Those of you who have witnessed a fall and those of you who have fallen know the horror of the moment. Those of you who have not I pray you never do.

Written by Ken Gurvin



## MORE ANNOUNCEMENTS



### CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION FEST July 21st

Centennial Celebration Fest is a day of recreation for adults and families at all levels following by food, music & beer at McPhelemy City Park in Buena Vista from 4pm to 8pm. Committee volunteers, hiking and fly fishing leaders needed. Denver Bicycle Touring Club will be leading mountain and road bike trips. Contact: Linda Lawson [lk14er@comcast.net](mailto:lk14er@comcast.net)

### 14ER CHALLENGE

**On September 8<sup>th</sup> CMC will celebrate our 100<sup>th</sup> birthday by having a CMC-led team on every 14er in the State.**

**Trip Leaders:** CMC trip-leaders interested in leading a trip on September 8<sup>th</sup> should contact Sherry Richardson:

[sherry@richardsonreporting.com](mailto:sherry@richardsonreporting.com)

As of early February, over 32 of the 54 peaks have been requested. Let's make it 100 leaders and co-

leaders for this historic event! Talk with Sherry **NOW!**

Teams will be equipped with spots or sat phones so their progress can be tracked by support/communication teams at climb headquarters (location TBD). Teams will have 100th anniversary flags for unveiling at the summits. Photos will be taken and sent by smart phones to the 14er climb headquarters, where we'll have a big tent, screen, and bulletin boards to track the progress of every team, ascending and descending.

The next day all trip participants are welcomed to join support-team members, CMC members, and members of the general public at a climbs celebration party at climb headquarters.

This program is in addition to the separate Centennial Celebration initiative entitled the Centennial Celebration Climbs, to climb all the highest 100 ranked peaks in Colorado multiple

times throughout 2012. The specifics of the Centennial Celebration Climbs (CCC) are also available at the Centennial Celebration link on the CMC home page

### **Free Membership to Promotive.com for discounts on outdoor gear!**

Promotive.com is a website that allows brands to offer discounts to teams of VIPs, Pros, and sales influencers. The brands featured on Promotive.com recognize your role as an industry influencer and offer these deep discounts in exchange for spreading the word about their products.

CMC is set up on Promotive.com as a "Team." Through this Team you are able to access discount programs from over 100 brands including: Suunto, Leki, Helly Hansen,

Gregory, Big Agnes, Scarpa, Skullcandy, Crank Brothers, and many more...

*\*This benefit is for CURRENT CMC TRIP LEADERS & CURRENT CMC INSTRUCTORS*

\*All Promotive.com applications expire within a year of being approved so volunteers must reapply annually.

#### **Here's How to Sign Up for Promotive.com:**

Go to:

[www.promotive.com/coloradomountainclub](http://www.promotive.com/coloradomountainclub)

Click "Join This Team." Scroll down until you locate Colorado Mountain Club.

We do not have a team ID number.

Click the Trip Leader or School Instructor box.

Whether an Instructor or Leader you are asked to List Instruction Dates or Trips Led Dates so have this information in hand when you go to the site.

Submit Application and allow 3-5 business days for approval.

*Questions? Contact MEMBERSHIP SERVICES:  
303/279-3080 EXT 2*