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www.hikingdenver.net
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Denver Group Annual Accident Report

You traveled well this year. Out of 1479 documented trips, we had 12 accidents requiring medical follow-up. That's a rate of .008 or less than 1%. Of course we don't like to see any accidents, but that would be unrealistic. We can, however, show you a few interesting statistics and give you some insight into prevention.

We have said this often but it's worth repeating. We are constantly impressed by the care given to our members by our leaders. You are well trained and it shows. No emergency is handled perfectly and we don't expect it of you. Just

do your best in using the resources available to you. Now....does that take a little pressure off of you?

An accident is a significant event in which medical attention was sought. Keep in mind that there is a Near Miss category added to the Incident reports. A "near miss" is a significant event that came *CLOSE* to being an official accident. A near miss report helps by giving us an overall picture of accidents and some of their causes. It's an invaluable piece of information so please continue to report them.

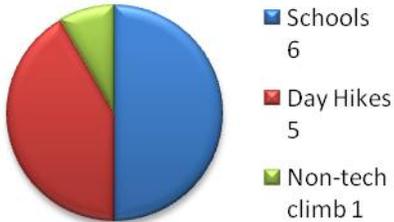
Below are some of the statistics gathered from accidents that occurred within the last year, followed by the lessons learned. We hope you will look at them and take into consideration the factors involved in accidents. Realistically, we cannot provide an accident-free environment, but we can provide guidance in keeping our members safe. Situational awareness is a key component of accident prevention.

Deb Robak – DG Safety Director

STATISTICS

FY 2011-2012

12 Accidents



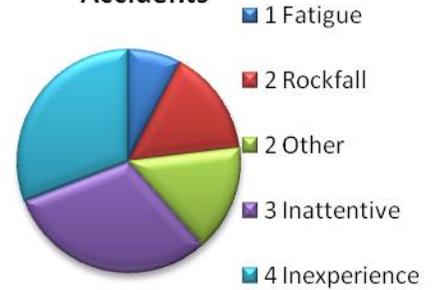
You may note from this chart that 50% of the accidents occurred in the schools. That is up from an average of 36% over the last 6 years.

1479 Trips



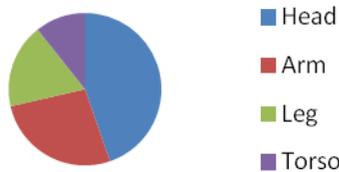
This is less than 1%. Historically, in the last 6 years, accidents range from 7-12 per year. Methods in accident reporting have also varied over that time period.

Direct Causes of 12 Accidents



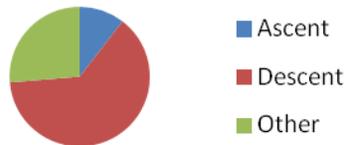
These results assign a single direct cause to each event. As in most cases, there are multiple factors leading up to a single event such as fatigue and lack of attention contributing to a fall.

Type of Injuries 12 Accidents



- 25% or 3 accidents required evacuation.
- 10 injuries were the result of falls. 2 resulted from rock fall.
- Not included were the near misses. Most were minor lower leg injuries and abrasions.

12 Accidents & 10 Near Misses



Clearly, most accidents happen on the descent. This is consistent with the last 6 years of reporting. The "OTHER" category includes fairly flat surfaces or rock fall.

Lessons Learned

Books such as “Colorado 14er Disasters: Victims of the Game” by Mark Scott-Nash and “Accidents in North America Mountaineering” by American Alpine Club give us great insight into how accidents happen. Often times, there are multiple factors coming together that create a perfect storm resulting in an accident.

In reference to the “direct cause” chart, many factors often came into play concerning an accident. Sometimes fatigue led to the inattention that led to an accident. There are a few things a leader can do to prevent this from happening:

- **Fatigue:** Pay attention to your participants and communicate with your rear leader. Does anyone appear to be struggling? Most CMC-ers would rather eat nails than admit they are having difficulty. During your rest stops ask how they are doing or if the pace is OK. Open the dialog and let them know there are options in altering a hike. Let your participants know they are all part of a team that works together. If you suspect someone is struggling and not speaking up, take them aside and ask them in private, explaining that it is THEIR responsibility to tell you if something is wrong.
- **Inattention:** I often wondered why my hiking group in Utah didn’t have serious accidents considering the terrain we covered. Often times, there was no margin for error. It required your full attention because one misstep could send you hurdling into a seemingly endless abyss. We take our nicely groomed trails for granted. We get together with our friends and start chatting, possibly following too closely, and bam.....you go down. It happened to me a few days ago. If you have one of those “friendly” groups, mention this to them. I bet there is not one person who hasn’t tripped on a tree root. As a leader, point out some of the obstacles. Remind your participants to pay attention, keep a safe distance, etc.
- **Inexperience:** Educate your group on safety when you cross streams, descend scree, cross loose rock, etc. Show them some of the things you learned in the schools and encourage them to take a CMC class.
- **Handling an emergency:** Utilize your resources. If someone injures themselves, you may have a more experienced member to administer first aid. You can facilitate as an “Incident Commander” while others tend to the victim. In an upcoming Newsletter, we will address this and give you some guidelines.
- **Injuries:** Take time in assessing injuries.
 - a. What appears to be a sprained ankle can actually be a fracture even though the person can still walk on it.
 - b. Head injuries may seem minor but you must always look beyond it and observe for diminishing neurological symptoms throughout the hike and before they leave for home.
 - c. One of the grey areas that are very hard to assess is the vague symptoms of what may appear to be exhaustion. Be careful not to pass the person off as a nuisance who might end up ruining your trip. A simple break with food and water might do the trick, but always look beyond that for red flags such as pre-existing conditions (diabetes), heart attack/angina, or AMS. Now this doesn’t mean you have to perform a full physical, but just keep it in mind.
 - d. Review the Newsletters. They’re archived under subject matter on the Denver Group website, hikingdenver.net. The Newsletters include articles on avalanche, leg injuries, heart attack, to name a few.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

AVALANCHES:

So, you don't think there is sufficient snow for avalanches on the Front Range? Think again and check out the CAIC.org website. From December 9th to December 11th there have been 10 avalanches reported in these areas – all of which we ski or snow shoe on: Vail Pass, 10 Mile Rage, Loveland Pass, Berthoud Pass, Jones Pass, Butler Gulch and Uneva Peak.



January 5th is Session 2 of the Avalanche Terrain Avoidance Seminar with optional half day field day in the afternoon. Register on line at cmc.org. This seminar is required for all NEW Leaders after September 30, 2011. All existing leaders prior to that time were grandfathered for 5 years. ATA Session 3 is scheduled February 12th Lecture and February 16th Optional Field half day.

AIARE Level 1 Session 1 February 1-3 Lecture & Field Days out of Empire, and Session 2 February 26 & 28 Lectures at AMC and March 2-3 Field Days are open for registration at cmc.org. All NEW backcountry leaders after September 30, 2011 are required to take this school to travel in the backcountry. All existing backcountry leaders were grandfathered for 5 years if certified prior to September 30, 2011.

WINTER TRAILS DAY: Looking for new snowshoes, or your first pair of snowshoes?



Check out various brands at Winter Trails Day at Echo Lake on January 12 or January 19th at Estes Park. <http://www.snowlink.com/wintertrails.aspx>



Make a Difference: DS&L needs volunteers for the following positions: Secretary, Backup IT Manager, Accident investigation

If you're interested, contact Linda Lawson lk14er@comcast.net