



Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team, Inc.
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March 23, 2020

Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Community Message Regarding Backcountry Travel

Dear fellow backcountry enthusiasts:

Taking risks in the backcountry comes with big responsibility and can lead to big consequences. This is not the time to take risks. Small accidents can quickly manifest into major problems that can become life threatening. Your actions in the backcountry can impact others. Backcountry incidents that require rescue have the potential to strain an already overburdened EMS and hospital system. There is potential that normally available rescue resources will not be available, including helicopter rescue. A backcountry rescue without helicopter assistance may take days. Small traumas may become life threatening.

Any rescue exposes all parties to the potential for cross contamination with COVID-19. TNSAR is an all volunteer organization. We are adhering to the governor's mandate for social distancing and hope you are as well. A rescue would require us to compromise social distancing and would require us to thoroughly decontaminate all equipment used in the rescue including our trucks and snowcats.

We have to ask ourselves, is this a low risk, low consequence activity or is it a high risk, high consequence activity or somewhere in between? Right now that risk includes exposure to COVID-19. We need to objectively match the risk of our activity with the consequences should something go wrong. The risks include environmental factors such as weather, avalanches, rock fall, and high water among just a few. Other risk factors are specific to each individual and each party. These factors include making sure our fitness and skill level is commensurate to the task. We must make sure we have the planning, mapping, first aid and self rescue skills to be self sufficient. We must educate ourselves to the risks associated with backcountry travel. We must be honest with ourselves and our backcountry team about our knowledge of backcountry travel and our physical abilities.

Backcountry adventures help us all maintain our physical and mental health, but backcountry travel has inherent risks. Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue encourages people to recognize the responsibility they have for the risks they incur and who may be impacted. Please be safe and smart backcountry travelers.

Sincerely,
TNSAR Board of Directors