

FATAL ALERT

March 13, 2009

A ski patroller working for a ski resort company was fatality injured while ski patrolling an out bound area. The injury occurred when the ski patroller sustained massive trauma to the back portion of the head. Two (2) ski patrollers were performing “out bound ski patrol activities”, in a very remote area, when the accident occurred. The accident was witnessed by the co-worker. The co-worker of the victim stated that he was the first to ski through the crux of the chute in the area. The co-worker advised that the other patroller was taking a lot of time deciding how to pass through the crux of the chute. The co-worker stated that at a slow speed, the victim made it passed the crux in the chute, but was unable to “maintain control” once through this element. The co-worker advised the victim fell on her right side initially, then “tumbled down” the slope and came to rest at a point approx. 400 yards from the beginning point. The co-worker advised that he skied to the victim’s location, “straightened her out, assessed her airway and then called for help”.

The deceased was an experienced ski patroller at the ski resort and had many years in the profession.

Significant Factors:

- Deceased was working as a member of the ski patrol for a ski resort company.
- The deceased was unable to maintain control once through a critical crux in the chute of a down hill slope, fell and sustained an injury to the head from the fall down the slope of approx. 400 yards.
- The deceased was exposed to massive head trauma and within days after the injury, died as a result.

Recommendations:

- Brief all employees on the facts and circumstances of this fatal mishap.
- Brief/retrain all employees on the dangers of working as a ski patroller, dangers of working near/at angled heights, and icy/snowy slippery walking/working surfaces that can injure employees.
- Train/retrain all employees to recognize and avoid unsafe work locations when working near/at angled heights.
- Recommend employees engaged in the ski patrol work process wear a protective approved-type of head protection.
- Ensure a PPE Hazard Assessment is certified.