

Fatal Alert

On June 14, 2017, three kayak guides were leading a party of nine clients on Yellowstone Lake. The guide service supplied all gear and Kayaks to the clients. The guided trip was to the West Thumb geyser basin and then back to the Grants village marina.

On the return trip from the West Thumb geyser basin a client's kayak capsized. The three guides got the client back into his kayak and were struggling to get him back to the shoreline. At this point, guide one's kayak capsized. Guide two took the client to shore while guide three attempted to help guide one into his boat. Two clients of the party came and helped get guide two and the client to shore.

Client two then went to help guide one and guide three. After client three was sure guide two and client one were ok, client three took guide two's kayak out to help with guide one and three. With the two clients help guide one was pulled out of the water.

The party was rescued by the National park service water Rangers and transported to the marina where guide one was pronounced dead as a result of exposure and hypothermia.

Significant factors

- The three guides on the water the day of the incident were all first year guides with the longest tenured guide being the deceased at 29 days.
- The guides were not trained in self or buddy rescue techniques for kayaks.
- The guides were using everyday clothing for extremity protection.
- The guides were not familiar with the companies emergency response procedures.

Recommendations

- The employer should evaluate the rescue training provided to its guides, as well as the training used to familiarize new guides with their duties within the company's emergency response plan.
- The employer should reevaluate their PPE policy specific to Yellowstone lake.