



# WASHOE COUNTY **SHERIFF** **NEWSLETTER**

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## WINTER HIKING TIPS

1. Dress like an onion. Be sure to dress in layers. Since temperatures vary from the trailhead to the summit, a variety of insulating clothing will help you regulate your body temperature.



2. Start small and start early. Be prepared for the distance and difficulty of the trail. The sun sets earlier in winter months so plan to be off the trail before dark. Keep in mind an injury or accident could happen any time due to terrain. Have a plan if you do get injured.

3. Bring safety gear. Aside from basic hiking gear, be sure to include a few basic items such as your cell phone, GPS/compass, pocket knife or mini tool, first aid kit, and rain poncho and/or foil blanket.

4. Check the weather. Look at precipitation, wind speed, avalanche reports and daylight hours.

5. Learn to use crampons. If the trail is icy, crampons can make the difference in preventing injury. If you are new to crampons, try them on easier trails first.

6. Let someone know where you are. Let a friend or family member know specific and accurate trail information of where you are as well as when you are expected to return.

7. Take an experienced friend. Hiking with friends is always the way to go, especially in winter. Not only is it more fun, but also safer to be with a group.

8. Water, water, water. It is essential to bring plenty of water when hiking in the winter, as dehydration is a common problem.

9. Invest in good gear. There are some basics every hiker should have: crampons or snowshoes, waterproof / resistant pants and jacket, knee-high gaiters, waterproof/resistant boots, a lightweight backpack, and sunglasses.

10. Be prepared to turn around. Legendary mountaineer Ed Viesturs once said "getting to the top is optional, getting down is mandatory." Don't hesitate to turn around if you run into conditions that look dangerous.

11. Don't hesitate to call SAR if in trouble. If you get lost, call 911 for Search and Rescue – Washoe Sheriff's SAR is a free service we provide to the public. Your safe return home is our priority!

12. Lastly, be sure to reward yourself when you come off the trails for a job well-done! Treat yourself to a great meal.

# HASTY TEAM



*"I suited up in dive gear and got lowered down into a mine shaft in Fresno."* - Mark Bell

*"Two gentlemen had tipped a canoe on Pyramid Lake."* - Charles Smart

*"We were rescuing a gentleman who had gotten drunk and fallen halfway down and broken his back."*  
- Randy Post

*"Had we not gotten her out of there, she wouldn't have made it the night."* - Luke Holcomb

**RENO, Nev. (News 4 & Fox 11)** — These are just some of the scenarios unpaid HASTY Team volunteers respond to. No matter what the call is, they answer. Team member Mark Bell said, "the call comes out, the page will go out, and we'll be told where to go, what to bring."

Members of the Washoe County Sheriff's Office HASTY Team are on call around the clock, ready to drop everything to respond to an emergency. Rescue technician Luke Holcomb said, "we do just about everything. We do mountain rescues up in the Tahoe area. We've taken part in a couple of avalanche rescues."

The rescuers train year-round to maintain their skills and learn new ones. Team president Charles Smart said, "given the time of the year, this year we're focusing on avalanche, winter survival, ice rescues, swift water- those sort of things take a priority."

Team members focus on different specialties, making the 50-person crew so unique, their talents are often called upon outside of Washoe County. Bell said, "we get calls from other counties in California and Nevada primarily. We got a call one time for a victim who had fallen into a mine." None of the team members are paid for the work they do. Smart said he worked about 400 hours on a completely volunteer basis last year.

The sheriff's office provides them basic gear, but everything they need after that comes out of their own pockets. Rescue technician Randy Post has been on the HASTY team for 24 years. He said, "we do pay for our own equipment and it runs into thousands of dollars." Post estimates he's spent \$10,000 during his time on the team. Some of the rescuers even pay for their own training classes.

Smart said, "we're all out here for the same reason and it takes a certain type of character to be out here in these sorts of conditions." The HASTY Team has hit its limit of 50 members, and a sheriff's office spokesperson tells us there is already a waiting list for other volunteers hoping to join.

Several senior members have been on the HASTY Team for more than 30 years, never asking for anything in return for their community service.

Holcomb said, "that's the worst time of [a victim's] life and you're there for them so it's good to be able to provide that service to the community." HASTY Team members said you shouldn't hesitate to call for help if you get into a life-threatening situation. They suggest staying put after you make contact with emergency responders because it makes it easier for HASTY rescuers to find you.





SHERIFF CHUCK ALLEN



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## WINTER DRIVING

Winter driving can be risky, so a safety refresher now can help prevent headaches later. The Sheriff's Office see too many crashes from drivers not slowing down in winter conditions. We ask that drivers slow down, wear their seatbelts and turn off their cruise control. Statistical data showed that as many as 800 car accidents statewide were caused by unsafe driving behaviors in wet and snowy conditions last year.

[CLICK HERE FOR SAFETY TIPS](#)



Unfortunately, phone scams in which the perpetrators pretend to be from the Washoe County Sheriff's Office, and use the names of real Sheriff's Office personnel, are not new. Typically with these types of scams, the scammer provides instruction on how the payment should be submitted, usually through an "eGift" cash card, pre-paid credit card, or similar payment to a specified account or name given by the caller.

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office does not ask for payment over the phone or negotiate for payment in lieu of arrest. Anyone with questions about a law enforcement issue is asked to call the Sheriff's Office or the appropriate local law enforcement agency before providing any information or making payments.

Anyone who has suffered a loss as a result of this type of scam is encouraged to contact the Washoe County Sheriff's Office at (775) 328-3001 (option 7).