



North Tahoe and Meeks Bay Fire Protection Districts



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Chief's Corner: Sierra Sun and Bonanza

"Fire Agencies work together to support safety on the slopes"

Did you know that the local fire agencies in the Truckee and North Tahoe area work together to **provide a response network of Paramedic Ambulance and Paramedic Engine companies?** This type of integration **allows** the Districts to provide the most efficient emergency services without delays. Meeks Bay Fire Protection District will be re-instating a paramedic engine to the station beginning in January, helping to insure full paramedic coverage throughout the District.

It's a good thing that the local fire agencies work together because; as usual we've seen an influx of calls to our District. It's no secret that the amount of traffic and people to the area doubles during the holidays, which in turn ups our call volume significantly. Whether the call is to transport a medical patient, or the call is to help extinguish a fire, our crews are trained and ready to respond immediately. The North Tahoe Fire Protection District works alongside the local ski resorts to help insure the best care to visitors and locals alike by providing additional assistance and transport to hospitals.

Injuries while recreating outdoors are common, and winter sports are no exception. According to the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) serious injuries (paralysis, serious head, and other serious injuries) occur at the rate of about 44.7 per year. During the 2011/12 season, there were 510 serious injuries. Even with the potential risks, the health and fitness benefits of skiing and snowboarding are enjoyed by people of all ages across the slopes each season.

These partial safety tips from NSAA will help keep you safe on the hill:

- Take a lesson. Like anything, you'll improve the most when you receive some guidance. The best way to become a good skier or snowboarder is to take a lesson from a qualified instructor.
- The key to successful skiing/snowboarding is control. To have it, you must be aware of your technique, the terrain and the skiers/snowboarders around you. Be aware of the snow conditions and how they can change. As conditions turn firm, the skiing gets hard and fast. Begin a run slowly.
- Skiing and snowboarding require a mental and physical presence.
- If you find yourself on a slope that exceeds your ability level, always leave your skis/snowboard on and side step down the slope.
- The all-important warm-up run prepares you mentally and physically for the day ahead.
- Drink plenty of water. Be careful not to become dehydrated.



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- Curb alcohol consumption. Skiing and snowboarding do not mix well with alcohol or drugs.
- Know your limits. Learn to ski and snowboard smoothly-and in control. Stop before you become fatigued and, most of all have fun.
- If you're tired, stop skiing. In this day and age of multi-passenger gondolas and high-speed chairlifts, you can get a lot more time on the slopes compared to the days of the past when guests were limited to fixed grip chairlifts.
- Follow the "Your Responsibility Code," the seven safety rules of the slopes:
 1. Always stay in control.
 2. People ahead of you have the right of way.
 3. Stop in a safe place for you and others.
 4. Whenever starting downhill or merging, look uphill and yield.
 5. Use devices to help prevent runaway equipment.
 6. Observe signs and warnings, and keep off closed trails.
 7. Know how to use the lifts safely.

Michael Schwartz joined the North Tahoe Fire Protection District as its Fire Chief in 2012, after serving 29 years with a neighboring fire agency. Along with his wife Jean, they have been a part of the Lake Tahoe community since 1978.

**SEE PHOTO AND CAPTION ON FOLLOWING PAGE*



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Squaw Valley Ski Patrol works together with North Tahoe Fire Protection District Paramedics and Squaw Valley Fire Paramedics to transport a patient to Tahoe Forest Hospital.