

Back Country 911 – When training and having the right tools produce a good outcome!





911, when Cell phones are not an option

On Wednesday August 7, 2019 Lisa was thrown from her horse while on a pack trip with other BCHI members in the Frog Lake area of the Bolder White Cloud Wilderness. Many of the members on this trip had attended one or more [Wilderness First Aid training](#) opportunities and their training kicked it. It was quickly determined that Lisa had suffered a major trauma with possible injury to her head, neck, back and pelvic regions. It was obvious that advance medical treatment was called for and air evacuation was her best option.

Accident → [inReach\[SOS\]](#) → [GEOS Response Center](#) → [Idaho State Comm's](#) → [Life Flight dispatch](#) → Advanced medical help arrives

[inReach Webinar – What Happens When You Trigger an SOS?](#)

You plan to avoid emergencies, but they do occur. In this instructional webinar led by Chip Noble, senior product manager at Garmin, and Emily Thompson, emergency operations manager at GEOS, we discussed what happens when you trigger an SOS. We also covered the SOS functionality on inReach devices, how the IERCC at GEOS coordinates a rescue response and steps you can take to help aid in your rescue.

[Next generation satellite beacons](#)

One of the members of the trip was carrying a Garmin inReach Mini and activated its SOS function. Soon she was texting the [IERCC center](#) giving them details of the accident. The IERCC in turn contacted the [Idaho State Communication Center](#) who took over the coordination of the case.



Emergency Locater Beacons with bi-directional texting

The [GEOS International Emergency Response Coordination](#) Center (IERCC) is the only global Search and Rescue Coordination Center for Satellite Emergency Notification Devices (S.E.N.D.). GEOS is proud of the work we have done locating people in distress no matter where they are. This is accomplished through our global partnerships with SEND providers, our technology, and our broad reach to official Search and Rescue (SAR) Agencies around the globe! Our operations team never stops until the mission is done and that is why GEOS has successfully coordinated the rescues of thousands of people in need in over 170 countries.

[Idaho State EMS Communications Center](#) or more commonly known as StateComm, is a 24/7 emergency communications center located in Meridian, Idaho. StateComm is a Component of the Bureau of EMS and Preparedness, Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Welfare.

StateComm provides emergency dispatch and communications for EMS, Idaho Transportation Department, Fish and Game, Hazardous Material incidents, Public Health emergencies, AMBER Alerts and many other situations and scenarios.

Contact: 800-632-8000 / 208-846-7610 / 877-554-3367 IdahoEMS@dhw.idaho.gov
Or Channels 1 & 2 on the Squaw Butte Radio's

[Radio Procedures & Etiquette](#)

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[Evac Helicopter](#) [LF1](#) [LF2](#)

How high can a helicopter go to pick you up?

[Question] The landing zone was at 8,900 feet and before they landed, they circled for an hour burning off fuel and even with that reduced weight, they needed to leave a crew member on the ground to get the bird back into the air. It sounded to me that 9K seem to be about the maximum before they need to consider a different model. I know on Mount Hood they call in national guard Black hawks, which according to google can fly at 15K and I assume land at around 13?

[Ron Fergie] I am so familiar with this scenario. There are many variables that are in play anytime a helicopter does a flight like that. The biggest one tends to be temperature but there are a few more. If that flight was done on a different day with a different crew, they may have been able to lift off with all crew members on board. Here are a few of those variables:

Temperature, Crew weight, patient weight, density altitude of the LZ, winds, fuel on board. Fuel on board is one that can be played with a little bit, but they still have to have enough fuel to reach their destination plus 20 minutes of flight time for reserve. Since we've been going through the hottest part of the year, I'm guessing it was pretty warm that day, therefore the density altitude was much higher than the pressure altitude at that location. Combine that with the other factors and you have the scenario that took place.

You mentioned Blackhawks. Even they have to deal with the same issues but on a much larger scale. I would like to know if it was Life Flight Network or Air Saint Luke's who did the flight. They have two different types of aircraft and that too can make a big difference.

I actually have a manager from LFN stopping by my house tomorrow sometime. If I'm here when he comes I'll ask him about their direct activation system. LFN is who flew Lisa. They are in the process of getting new aircraft partially because of this very scenario.

The problem is almost any aircraft will have the same issues at some point. Before I left that company, we were actually looking at buy a helicopter that would have done this flight with no problem. Cost of the aircraft always come into play so as far as I know they dropped it. In addition, once you start getting into the larger aircraft you also start needing larger landing areas

On Fri, Aug 9, 2019 Lisa wrote:

I can't express how thankful I am for you and all of the ladies! I never felt worried or afraid. All of their first aid training kicked in and they did everything right. If they hadn't, I would have been a lot worse off than I am. Thank you all for saving me from something that could have changed my life forever.

Lessons Learned:

1. Accidents will happen and you need the knowledge and tools to evaluate the situation and if necessary, contact outside assistance no matter where you are.
2. Get advanced first aid training that will allow you to evaluate the injured and provide appropriate care until they can be evacuated to the trail head or in this case directly to a care facility.
3. Carry multiple ways to communicate, Cell phones, inReach or Spot devices, forest service channeled radios.
4. Know how your communication devices work and what you need to tell a communication center like, 911, State Comm's, IERCC.
5. Stay cool and think each step through, but don't over think, you need to act.
6. Travel with people who have similar training and discuss what should be done if an injury or such event occurs.



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