



Risk Advisory

The recognition and management of the inherent risks and hazards of living and traveling in remote wild areas is taught and practiced on every trip and course. Sierra Expeditions is committed to promoting a positive learning environment as well as physical and emotional well-being for all participants. We are very proud of our excellent record managing the risks of wilderness travel.

It is important to remind participants and their families that Sierra Expeditions trips and courses are not easy and involve travel through rugged terrain in which there are real dangers. The management of these dangers is a fundamental part of the Sierra Expeditions program.

Wilderness activity involves hazards. These hazards are integral parts of a wilderness experience. They can include: rock fall, wild rivers, interaction with wildlife (bears, rattlesnakes and mountain lions), exposure to water-borne pathogens, and equipment failure. The forces of nature can produce extreme temperatures, both freezing and excessive heat, lightning, hail, rain, flash floods, and forest fires. Activities ranging from simple day hikes to climbing above 14,000 ft. can become, due to error in judgment or the unpredictable forces of nature, dangerous and potentially life threatening.

Our expeditions travel isolated areas. The remoteness in which we travel can create complex emergency situations that do not have simple solutions. Sierra Expeditions has developed a comprehensive wilderness emergency response and evacuation procedures, and uses appropriate field communication technology in remote wilderness locations. We carry a radio or satellite telephone on each of our trips or courses, in case of life-threatening emergencies, but this does not guarantee reliable communication from the field to our base camp. Radios/satellite phones and other portable electronic devices can be unreliable depending on terrain, atmospheric conditions, and other variables. The majority of medical incidents (sprains, flu, diarrhea, etc.) may be treated in the field, and self-rescued to the nearest trailhead. A more serious incident, such as a fracture, will require evacuation of the patient to a medical facility.

Things to expect of yourself: You will sleep outdoors, prepare your own meals, and be expected to care for yourself in weather conditions that can be extreme. You may be exposed to accident, illness, and or injury associated with high elevation, physically demanding activities, vehicle transportation, and inclement weather.

Most participants involved with Sierra Expeditions programs do not experience injuries because they have proper preparation, are conscious of risks, and take safety precautions. Being prepared for an expedition means being physically fit, having the proper equipment and clothing, being willing to follow instructions, working together as a group, and taking responsibility for your own health and safety. It is important that you understand that there are risks. The risk of injury, even serious injury or death is unavoidable in the outdoor environment in which we travel and teach. Much of the learning that can be acquired in these wilderness settings is learning how to identify hazards and adapt behavior, not only on a single trip or course, but for a lifetime of enjoying the outdoors.