



## AAC Publications

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### **Failure to Follow Route, Stranded, Weather**

Oregon, Mt. Hood, South Side Route

On November 28, Jeff Kish (30) soloed the South Side Route but was overcome by a storm during his descent. Unable to navigate in whiteout conditions at 10,600 feet, he called 911 on his cell phone and requested assistance. Despite the low visibility and high winds, rescuers from Portland Mountain Rescue reached him about 10 hours later. During this delay he placed numerous calls to friends, even texting a message to a Facebook page. Later communication attempts by SAR managers to facilitate Kish's rescue failed because of his dead cell phone battery.

#### **Analysis**

Climbers should not rely solely on cell phones to initiate a rescue. In this event, the cell phone (and automatic GPS data transmitted, via E911) was instrumental in rescuing Kish successfully

Climbers using cell phones for emergencies should limit calls and conserve battery life. This may include placing/answering only critical calls, following instructions from SAR managers, following a predetermined call-back schedule, and leaving the phone turned off in between calls to save the battery. Phones also need to be kept warm and dry to maximize battery and display performance. (Source: Jeff Scheetz, Portland Mountain Rescue.)

(Editor's note: In June 2012, the Oregonian and OregonLive.com published a list of all fatalities on Mt. Hood since 1848, including ages and circumstances. About 10,000 people attempt to climb the mountain each year. The majority of rescues are for snowboarders, skiers, and hikers, with only about 4 percent for climbers.)

## Images

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