



## AAC Publications

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### **Avalanche**

Oregon, Mt. Hood, Leuthold Couloir

**On May 23 at approximately 12:30 p.m., search and rescue coordinators were notified of an injured climber who had been in an avalanche. In the early morning hours of May 23, Danielle (23) and Shelby (28) set out to climb the Leuthold Couloir, on the west side of Mt. Hood, above the Reid Glacier.**

Danielle was approximately 10 to 15 feet above Shelby when an avalanche was triggered just above the Hourglass, a narrowing in the couloir. She tried arresting her slide but was pulled under. Shelby tried to grab her as she passed, but could not reach her. He noted her location and then, seconds later, a second slide swept him down the couloir.

Danielle was carried approximately 1,000 feet down onto the Reid Glacier. Shelby was able to arrest his slide earlier, and he scrambled down the debris path to Danielle and assessed her condition. The climbers sent a distress call by inReach around noon. Somewhat miraculously, neither was seriously injured, though Danielle had an ankle injury.

The climbers' location and responders' fatigue immediately following an all-night response to a stranded snowboarder made for a difficult rescue, involving multiple teams. Upon reaching the climbers, one group of rescuers treated Danielle and packaged her in a SKED litter, and another set up a line to haul her more than 500 vertical feet to Illumination Saddle, from which they would be able to ski down with her to Timberline Lodge. The climbers and rescue teams reached Timberline at 9:30 p.m. Danielle chose to seek her own medical attention.

### **ANALYSIS**

The climbers were well equipped, with avalanche safety gear and cell phones and a Garmin inReach for emergency communications. There are no formal avalanche forecasts for Mt. Hood this late in the season, but alerts had been posted on social media that avalanche risk would be high, following significant recent snowfall over an icy layer and warming temperatures.

Between the two operations over Memorial Day Weekend, search and rescue teams worked on Mt. Hood for nearly 23 hours straight. (Source: Clackamas County Sheriff's Office and news reports.)

## Images



Accident scene on the Reid Glacier on Mt. Hood after an avalanche in the Leuthold Couloir.



Avalanche debris below the Leuthold Couloir on Mt. Hood.

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