



## AAC Publications

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### Erroneous Reporting

Mt. Shasta, Clear Creek Route

**On June 16, Siskiyou County was notified of a missing climber on the Clear Creek Route of Mt. Shasta.** The climber had been overdue for 30 hours, and loved ones had lost communication and called 911. Mt. Shasta climbing rangers mobilized to the trailhead to begin search efforts on snowmobiles and skis. A California Highway Patrol (CHP) helicopter was launched and was quickly able to spot a climber descending the mountain at around 10,000 feet. CHP made visual and verbal contact with the climber and positively identified him as the missing climber. The climber indicated that he did not want help. CHP and the climbing rangers stood down.

On June 18, two days later, climbing rangers were again notified by the Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office that the same climber was still missing and had once again stopped communication with family. Rangers mobilized to begin a search. Two climbing rangers launched from the Clear Creek trailhead on snowmobiles, while two other rangers prepared for a CHP helicopter insertion onto the upper mountain. Just then, the climber, who had emerged onto a road, was located a quarter mile from the trailhead. The climber was in good condition, and all staff returned home.

### ANALYSIS

While 911 undeniably saves lives every year, it comes with disadvantages, including use of the service for non-emergency situations and, in this case, the issue of erroneous reporting. Even the best-intended false report can squander valuable rescuer time and resources and burden an overtaxed system. It might even impede a real emergency response. These 911 calls were placed by family members, never by the climber himself. In both instances, the climber was surprised to see SAR members and was not in need of help. It is important that the climber keep their loved ones or emergency contact updated as necessary. The climber had been on the mountain for five or six days on a route that normally takes one to two days. (Source: Mt. Shasta Climbing Rangers.)

**Images**

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