

## Outdoor fun requires safety preparedness

For those in the wilderness, help isn't always just a phone call away

**Jennifer Rollings**  
for the Emerald

The great outdoors.

It can be an exciting place for sports and activities, but a terrible one in which to be faced with an injury or emergency.

"It's a world where 9-1-1 is rarely an option," said Dan Geiger, associate coordinator of the Outdoor Program. "Safety is a responsibility that people should take seriously."

For students concerned about this responsibility, there is one time-honored adage that still holds true: always be prepared.

"Outdoor safety begins with having the right clothing and equipment, checking route and weather conditions and being physically fit for your adventure," said Michael Strong, co-director of the Outdoor Pursuits Program.

Strong, who teaches mountain climbing, avalanche safety and environmental education, stresses that the risks of outdoor activities require skills beyond what can be gained from a basic first aid class.

"If you're going into the backcountry, you need to educate yourself on the specific challenges of a wilderness environment," Strong said.

According to Strong, any person planning an outdoor trip should know how to deal with emergency situations and life-threatening injuries such as hypothermia and severe bleeding. If nothing else, one should receive CPR training.

"Statistically, CPR is most effective at saving hypothermia and near-drowning victims," Geiger said.

Another defense against the perils of the outdoors is a well-equipped first aid kit.

"Ideally, every kit should be customized for the trip you're going on," Geiger said, "but getting a commercial kit is a good idea."

According to Strong, a proper first aid kit should contain a CPR shield, latex gloves, medical tape, gauze and bandages. However, he cautions that in a wilderness environment, injuries must often be treated without sophisticated medical supplies.

"A good outdoorsman should know how to improvise with whatever is around," Strong said. He recalls being on a climbing trip in a remote location when a friend suffered a serious fall. Strong and his party substituted a door from a nearby ranch for a stretcher.

It is also important to learn how to address minor problems such as sunburns and sprained ankles.

"There are cases where peo-

*"A good outdoorsman should know how to improvise with whatever is around."*

**Michael Strong**  
Co-director, Outdoor Pursuits

ple on trips have dialed 9-1-1 for frivolous injuries," Geiger said. Tying up the phone lines at emergency service centers with insignificant complaints may prevent callers in dangerous circumstances from reaching help.

Another outdoor safety resource is the Allard & Casey Memorial Safety Library, located in room 37 of the Erb Memorial Union. The library provides students who participate in outdoor activities with cell phones, avalanche transceivers, radios, navigational aids and instructional books and videos.

Students interested in wilderness safety and survival classes offered through the Outdoor Pursuits Program should contact either Strong or James Blanchard, or visit the program's website at <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~opp/index.htm>. Those who want to receive CPR training can sign up for courses at the Student Health Center, which will offer certification workshops for both adult and child CPR this spring.

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