



Deschutes County Sheriff's Office
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MEDIA RELEASE

Severe Winter Weather Backcountry Advisory/Warning

All of Central Oregon and the Deschutes National Forest

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The Deschutes County Sheriff's Office and The Deschutes National Forest are issuing a joint advisory concerning backcountry travel in our areas. The following conditions may exist in all or some backcountry areas:

- **5-7 ft. of recent snowfall creates severe backcountry conditions**
- **Elevated avalanche conditions: natural and human triggered avalanches have been reported**
- **High winds have brought down trees across backcountry areas**
- **Snow cat operators report becoming disoriented and losing trails in whiteout conditions and extremely deep snow with severe snow drifts. Trail grooming is suspended during severe snow conditions.**

- **Backcountry and trail users alike have an increased likelihood of becoming exhausted, stuck, broken down, lost or injured during present conditions**
- **Cell phone service is limited in many backcountry areas, batteries die, users are often poorly equipped and do not know their location this may further complicate emergency situations.**
- **Search and Rescue assistance may take hours, overnight or even days before rescuers can reach people in urgent need. You not only risk your own life when in a dire situation, you risk the lives of rescue personnel. Instances of death increase during extreme weather events.**
- **Until conditions improve and the snow pack settles we advise all users of the hazardous conditions and to avoid backcountry areas, even backcountry trails.**
- **Current-severe winter hazards include: unconsolidated deep snow, strong winds, zero visibility, buried trail and other directional signing, variable (high to extreme) avalanche conditions, deep tree wells, buried hazards, downed trees, heavy snow/ice falling from trees, no trail grooming in high elevations, continued heavy snow and/or rain possible for several days. Slush and water hazards may develop with rain on snow conditions.**

The Deschutes County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue would urge all recreational users to use extreme caution during this current winter storm.