

General Advisory for Tuckerman and Huntington Ravines

Posted 6:45 a.m. Monday April 21, 2014
Expires 12:00 midnight, Wednesday April 23, 2014

Tuckerman and Huntington Ravines are under a late season General Avalanche Advisory. You will need to do your own snow stability assessments when traveling in avalanche terrain. General Advisories are valid for no more than three days, but may be updated earlier as conditions warrant.

Each season we reach a point where the day-to-day avalanche hazard is not significantly changing. We have reached this point in the 2014 season, for this reason we have decided to shift to a General Advisory. We will be monitoring the ravines, though with less of a snowpack-focused approach than we have for the past several months. For you, as a backcountry traveler, this means that you are responsible for assessing weather, snow, and avalanche conditions (this is always the expectation, but now we will have less daily information for you to utilize.) New snow, rain, or other weather may cause stability problems to exist even under a General Advisory.

At the time of this posting, the snowpack in the ravines is very stable. It has seen multiple melt-freeze cycles, which have added tremendous strength to the snowpack. There are both very warm temps and some rain expected in the next few days, so be thinking about the effects of a lot of running water throughout the snowpack and in the streams.

FALLING ICE is a very dangerous situation. The largest ice looms in the Sluice above Lunch Rocks, in the Center Bowl of Tuckerman, and throughout much of Huntington. Other areas pose this threat as well, though to a lesser extent. The best advice we can give is to not spend time underneath areas where ice may fall. Large rocks may provide some cover, but they have proven themselves in the past to be inadequate shields for people hiding behind them. Lunch Rocks is a hazardous location when icefall is a possibility!

CREVASSES AND WATERFALL HOLES are another potentially lethal hazard. Each season these form in many areas, the worst are in the Sluice, Lip, and Center Bowl. Many of these holes follow stream courses under the snowpack with icy water spraying around. Sunday evening we received our first report of a climber breaking through and dangling her body into a crevasses, thankfully she did not fall all the way in, and was able to climb out.

UNDERMINED SNOW is related to the hazard above. It occurs when streams have eroded away the snowpack from below, but left behind a bridge of snow. This bridge can collapse without warning under your weight, bringing you into the icy stream below. Give wide berth to areas that have already collapse or show signs of sagging or cracking.

LONG SLIDING FALLS are probably the #1 cause of injury each spring. Cold temperatures cause the soft corn snow to refreeze into a slick and solid mass of ice. We always recommend an ice axe and crampons for travel in steep terrain. You may not need them always, but if the unexpected happens these tools, and the ability to use them effectively, can save you from serious injury or death.

Please Remember:

- Safe travel in avalanche terrain requires training and experience. This advisory is just one tool to help you make your own decisions in avalanche terrain. You control your own risk by choosing where, when, and how you travel.
- Anticipate a changing avalanche danger when actual weather differs from the higher summits forecast.
- For more information contact the Forest Service Snow Rangers or the staff at Hermit Lake Shelters or Pinkham Notch Visitor Center.
- **Posted 6:45 a.m. April 21, 2014. A new advisory will be issued Thursday, April 24.**

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