



## MULTI-MODE RESCUE ON EAGLE RIDGE

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Sunday, 01 March 2009

At approximately 1100hrs on Sunday March 1st, 2009 a group of four friends were hiking near Barton Point on the Halvor Lunden trail above [Buntzen Lake](#) after having spent the night camping in the Lindsay Lake area. While moving across a snow slope, one member of their group slipped and fell approximately 10m. He came to a stop and at that time suffered a possible knee dislocation that caused him to slide another 10m down the slope. Tangled in a tree below his friends, the injured subject would spend the next few cold, wet hours waiting for rescue while 10 Coquitlam SAR members participated in an effort involving snow travel, [Mountain Rescue](#) techniques, two helicopters and a local snowmobile club.

Being unable to reach their injured companion, one of the remaining party of three was able to call 911, and Coquitlam SAR was activated at approximately noon. The SAR Manager on duty quickly started developing a plan on how to access the subject and get him out. [Talon Helicopters](#) was contacted, and SAR Manager and team physician Ian MacDonald launched from [YVR](#). Talon then flew to [Mount Seymour](#) in [North Vancouver](#) to pick up three additional SAR members (Al Hurley, Mark Sanford, Jim Delgrande) who were practising Mountain Rescue techniques. This first team was delivered to the LZ on [Eagle Ridge](#), and a second team (Mike McRae, Kyle Skidmore, Rollie Webb) was flown in with [Rope Rescue](#) and Medical equipment. A third SAR team (Sandy Burpee, Bill Papove, Cam Girvan) was flown in shortly thereafter, totalling 10 Coquitlam SAR members in the field, with more arriving at the Buntzen Lake command area to support the effort.

Voice contact with the subjects was made almost immediately after arriving on the ridge. While moving into the gully area below Barton Point from the south side, it was quickly realized that the subjects were on the north side, at the top of a steep rock wall. Teams had to climb back to the ridge, and travel along the trail at the top of the ridge to make it around the gully. Ian MacDonald returned to the landing zone to perform a reconnaissance flight over the area to try and nail down the subjects location from the air. This proved very difficult due to the dense canopy of trees. Once ground teams arrived on the north side of the gully, the subjects were located and the injured subject accessed via a rappel of approximately 20m.

While stabilizing the subject's injuries, it was confirmed a long line rescue would be required to safely and quickly extract the injured subject. The subject's leg was splinted and he was moved approximately 5m upslope to the spot where the long line would be dropped into the site. Shortly later, [North Shore Rescue](#) volunteer Gordie Ferguson was lowered into the site by Talon Helicopters and the subject was placed into a "screamer suit" for the extraction. Gordie and the subject were quickly pulled out and flown back to the landing zone at Buntzen Lake where [BCAS](#) Paramedics were waiting. Coquitlam SAR members escorted the remaining 3 uninjured subjects to a nearby location where they were picked up by Talon Helicopters and flown back to the Buntzen Lake landing zone.

With all subjects safely off the mountain, plans started for extraction of the SAR volunteers and equipment began. The weather closed in, preventing the use of a helicopter to move rescue equipment of the mountain with a cargo net. The equipment was wrapped in a tarp and left on the mountain for a pick up after the weather broke. With bad weather and darkness set in, 6 members

were still on the mountain. A plan to use a local snowmobile club to access the ridge and transport the members out was put into action. 3 members started down the logging road to meet the snowmobiles and the other 3 started to hike down the Halvor Lunden Trail. Unfortunately the snowmobile plan didn't work out as there wasn't enough snow between the high point on the road and the ridge for the snowmobiles to operate safely. The 3-person team continued to walk out. All members were out of the field and on their way home safely by 2130hrs.

The team would like to remind people that cell coverage in the backcountry is not guaranteed; This rescue was complicated by intermittent cell coverage. This contributed to some uncertainty as to the position of the party which slightly delayed the rescue. Always leave a trip plan with someone to let them know where you are going and when you are expected to return. We would also like to remind people that although it is almost spring at sea level, just a few hundred metres in altitude brings snow, and ice covered rocks.

Coquitlam SAR would like to thank the Coquitlam RCMP, Buntzen Lake Wardens, BC Ambulance Service, North Shore Rescue and the Burke Mountain Snowmobile Club for their assistance in this operation.

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