



Inyo County Sheriff's Office



Death Valley National Park  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

## Death Valley National Park / Inyo County Sheriff's Office News Release

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### Successful SAR in Cottonwood Canyon, Death Valley NP

DEATH VALLEY, CA – On the evening of February 6, Inyo County Sheriff's Office received report of a satellite SOS activation in the vicinity of Cottonwood Canyon, in Death Valley National Park.

A backpacker on a multi-day trip fell while descending into a side canyon west of the main Cottonwood Canyon, suffering a severe lower extremity injury. Hikers in the canyon below made audible contact with the injured subject above them and used their satellite device to call for help. Though unable to ascend the difficult terrain and assist the injured party, the reporting party made camp and spent the night in order to assist via satellite communication with Death Valley National Park Rangers.

Members of Inyo County Search and Rescue (SAR) met both CHP Inland Division Air Operation flight crew and Death Valley National Park Rangers at Stovepipe Wells around 8:30am February 7, where they conducted briefing and pre-flight checks in preparation for an immediate rescue hoist. A member of Inyo County SAR was inserted into the slot canyon via helicopter at 9:30am. CHP helicopter H-82 located a nearby landing zone while the subject was quickly splinted and prepared for hoist. The patient was then extracted to nearby emergency care.

According to Ranger Kevin Ross, Death Valley National Park's emergency services coordinator, good planning by both the injured man and the party that found him helped him survive. Both groups had filled out backcountry camping permits, which provided emergency contact information and planned routes to the park. Backcountry permits are free in Death Valley National Park.

The injured man was prepared to spend the night out, and had a sleeping bag. The injured man had brightly colored equipment with him, including an orange hat and

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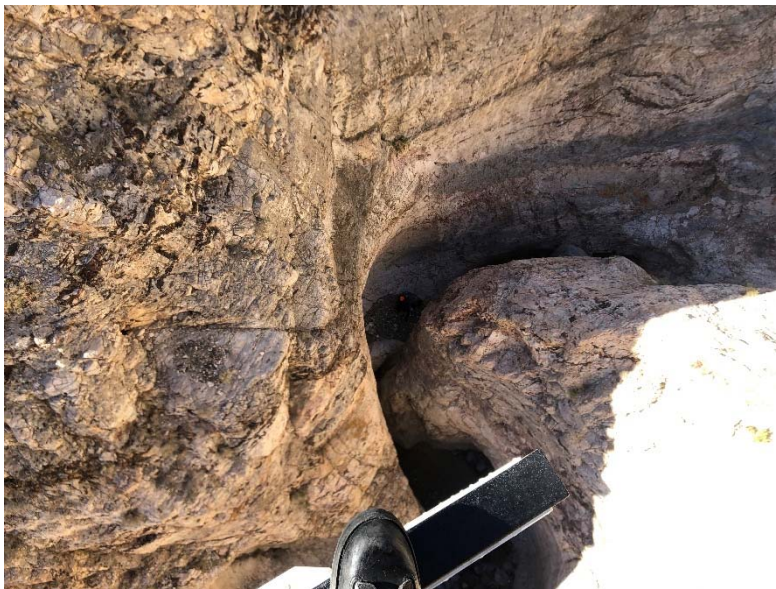
orange sleeping bag. That made it much easier to see him in the narrow canyon from the helicopter.

Ranger Ross also said that the two-way communications, which were possible because of the satellite emergency notification device the other hikers had, were invaluable.

Cell phones don't work in most of the park. In addition to carrying a satellite communication device, park rangers recommend that people hiking or driving to remote parts of the park tell someone back home what their plans are. That way, if they don't return on time, that person can notify park rangers.

-[www.nps.gov/deva](http://www.nps.gov/deva)-

*Death Valley National Park is the homeland of the Timbisha Shoshone and preserves natural resources, cultural resources, exceptional wilderness, scenery, and learning experiences within the nation's largest conserved desert landscape and some of the most extreme climate and topographic conditions on the planet. About two-thirds of the park was originally designated as Death Valley National Monument in 1933. Today the park is enjoyed by about 1,700,000 people per year. The park is 3,400,000 acres – nearly as large as the state of Connecticut. Learn more at [www.nps.gov/deva](http://www.nps.gov/deva).*



The lost and injured man's bright sleeping bag helped searchers in California Highway Patrol's helicopter find him.

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