



Deaths on the Slopes: 2008-2009 Ski Season

April 30, 2009 — 69-year-old Thomas Alfred Johnson of San Bruno, California died after hitting a tree while skiing at Squaw Valley USA in California.

April 11, 2009 — 46-year-old Edda Dunning of Cincinnati, Ohio died after skiing into a tree at the Canyons Resort in Park City, Utah.

April 5, 2009 — 59-year-old Mark E. Freeman, a cross-country skier from Ridgefield, Washington, died of an apparent heart attack near the White Pass Ski Area lodge in Washington.

April 4, 2009 — 51-year-old Thomas Kennedy of Londonderry, New Hampshire died after skiing at Alta Ski Resort in Utah. He was found critically injured, but there was “no immediate” indication he had collided with a tree. The sheriff’s report said “a heart attack or stroke were not out of the question.”

March 11, 2009 — A 68-year-old man from Guadalajara, Mexico died while skiing at the Deer Valley Resort in Park City, Utah. He was on the resort's Blue Bell Run when he lost control, swerved into a grove of trees and sustained serious head trauma. Authorities are withholding his name until they can contact his family.

March 10, 2009 — 21-year-old Caleb Szajner of Lake Elmo, Minnesota died from injuries sustained in a snowboarding accident when he tried to perform a back flip at Trollhaugen Ski Area in Dresser, Wisconsin.

March 7, 2009 — 50-year-old Roger Roepke of Enterprise, Oregon died in an avalanche while skiing in the Eagle Cap Wilderness in Wallowa County in Oregon.

March 5, 2009 — 30-year-old Christopher Blaise Polk, a snowboarding instructor from Glenwood Springs, Colorado, died after hitting a group of trees while snowboarding at Buttermilk Ski Resort in Colorado.

March 3, 2009 — 41-year-old Andrew Entin, a Squaw Valley USA ski patrolman, died in an avalanche at Squaw Valley USA ski resort near Lake Tahoe, California. Entin was working on avalanche control when part of the slope broke away and partially buried him.

February 25, 2009 — 18-year-old Royce Morgan of Wasilla, Alaska died after snowboarding at Hatcher Pass in Alaska. A wrong turn left Morgan stranded in deep snow and by the time rescuers found him, he was dead. Morgan’s brother, Matt Theodore, believes he froze to death.

February 23, 2009 — 58-year-old Robert Tara, a veteran ski patroller, died of an apparent heart attack while riding the Mott chair lift at Heavenly Mountain Resort in Lake Tahoe, California.

February 21, 2009 — 39-year-old Christopher Trethaway's body was found in a fresh avalanche west of Cascade Lake in an area near Maggie's Peak in Lake Tahoe, California. Trethaway was skiing alone in the backcountry.

February 18, 2009 — 49-year-old David Fisher of Lopez Island, Washington died while skiing at the Mount Baker ski area in Washington. Deputies said he was in a steep ski area called "The Rat Trap" when he fell and suffered head trauma.

February 16, 2009 — 19-year-old Aline Christina Martins of Santa Barbara, California died of what officials believe was suffocation after she fell into a tree well while snowboarding at Dodge Ridge ski resort in California.

February 3, 2009 — 55-year-old David Gilletti, an engineer from Ledyard, Connecticut, died after skiing into a tree on the Stella Run at Telluride Mountain Resort in Colorado.

January 21, 2009 — 16-year-old Rebecca McGill of Connecticut died from injuries suffered after crashing into a tree at Sugarloaf USA in Maine.

January 16, 2009 — 65-year-old June Kang of Cape Girardeau, Missouri died after a skiing accident on an intermediate ski run in Vail, Colorado. Kang suffered major injuries to her chest after a fall and hitting some sort of hydrant, reported the coroner.

January 16, 2009 — 32-year-old Russell Hochhalter of Bozeman, Montana died unexpectedly while skiing at the Bridger Bowl ski area in Montana. Autopsy findings show that Hochhalter died of natural causes, according to the Gallatin County Sheriff's Office.

January 9, 2009 — 35-year-old Douglas W. Thiessen, a Justice Department attorney who was the Maryland Republican Party's general counsel, died while skiing at Whitetail Ski Resort in Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. Thiessen was found "unresponsive on the side of a ski trail," according to a spokesman for the resort. Mr. Thiessen did not respond to cardiopulmonary resuscitation and was taken to a hospital in Hagerstown, where he was pronounced dead.

January 8, 2009 — 60-year-old Craig J. Foley of Butte, Montana died in a skiing accident at Lost Trail Powder Mountain ski area in Montana. Foley suffered a fall but was able to ski to the bottom of the hill before collapsing. The cause of death was listed as blunt force injuries.

January 7, 2009 — 22-year-old William "Billy" Khouri III, a snowboarder from Elk City, Oklahoma, died from head injuries suffered after crashing into a wooden post at the bottom of Breckenridge Ski Resort in Colorado. He was not wearing a helmet while snowboarding on Frosty's Freeway, an advanced-intermediate run.

January 7, 2009 — 25-year-old Kyle D. Suske of Athens, Wisconsin died of blunt-force trauma to his chest in a snowboarding accident at Granite Peak Ski Area in Wisconsin. Suske was "found on relatively flat groomed terrain," according to a statement issued by Granite Peak.

January 3, 2009 — 13-year-old Patrick Shire of Haymarket, Virginia died after hitting a tree while skiing at Ski Denton resort in Pennsylvania.

December 30, 2008 — 10-year-old Shelby Gillespie of Bushland, Texas died after she hit a tree while skiing at Santa Fe Ski Basin in New Mexico. Gillespie was with her parents and brother on Sunset Trail, an intermediate run.

December 29, 2008 — 44-year-old Gerald Reilly of Morristown, New Jersey died after he hit a tree while skiing at Whiteface Mountain in New York.

December 27, 2008 — 31-year-old David Nodine of Wilson, Wyoming died in an avalanche while snowboarding at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort in Wyoming.

December 27, 2008 — 38-year-old firefighter Brian Kopp of Larkspur and 19-year-old Mark Goetz of Arvada died in an avalanche while snowmobiling on Gravel Mountain in Colorado.

December 25, 2008 — 21-year-old Randall Davis of Tahoe City died in an avalanche while skiing on inbound terrain at Squaw Valley USA in California.

December 17, 2008 — 36-year-old Michael Bowen of Crested Butte, Colorado died in an avalanche while snowboarding near Mount Emmons, southwest of Aspen in Colorado.

December 14, 2008 — 27-year-old Heather Gross from Salt Lake City, Utah died in an avalanche while skiing at inbound terrain at Snowboard ski resort in Utah.

December 14, 2008 — 52-year-old Cory Brettman, a former Aspen ski patroller from Old Snowmass, Colorado, died in an avalanche while skiing on Aspen Mountain in Colorado.

December 13, 2008 — 28-year-old Adam Delaney of Englewood, Colorado died after hitting a tree while snowboarding on the Prospector Run at Keystone Ski Resort in Colorado.

December 8, 2008 — An unidentified 54-year-old male skier from Virginia was found unconscious on a trail at Winter Park Resort in Colorado. The cause of death has not yet been determined and a routine investigation is under way.

September 30, 2008 — 40-year-old Matthew Chesaux from Boulder, Colorado died while skiing on Taylor Glacier in Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. The manner of death was officially determined to be an accident, and the skier's death was caused by multiple blunt force injuries.

*Compiled by the California Ski and Snowboard Safety Organization (CSSSO).
Information obtained from online news sources and is not comprehensive.
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