

Being prepared and responsible

A week after a nice hike in the North Shore mountains you receive a \$150 fine attached to a photo of you standing at a trailhead.

You recognize yourself in the grainy color image because you're wearing your favorite tennis shoes and tank-top.

The letter is marked North Vancouver RCMP, and your sin is "Wearing clothing unsuitable for the outdoors."

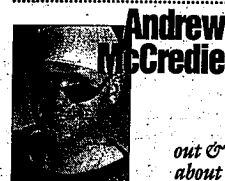
Sound far-fetched? Maybe so, but so do (did) cameras at intersections. That Orwellian approach to making our streets safer is in response to increasing carnage on our roadways. Likewise, cameras in the woods would be used to fine people who stumble into the North Shore woods unprepared.

Search and rescue statistics reveal that more and more people get into trouble in the B.C. outdoors each year. Considering the close proximity of the North Shore mountains to an ever-expanding urban behemoth, it's likely that trend will continue.

But not if local police, search and rescue members and other officials have their way. Over the past few months, representatives from these and other organizations have come together and formed a common front to promote outdoor safety guidelines.

"Our goal here is to stress individual responsibility when people venture outdoors," North Van RCMP Inspector Jamie Graham said at a press conference last Wednesday. "Each and every person that ventures outdoors or engages in outdoor activity must take responsibility for their own actions."

Graham was joined by West Van. police, North Shore Search and Rescue members, North Shore ski hill operators and other emergency response officials to launch the new



out & about

required.

"For the 4,250 men and women who provide or deliver the search and rescue service, this (initiative) is fantastic," said Brewer. "We are now going to provide the individuals with a code of responsibility."

Tips for exploring the outdoors:

- Tell a responsible person your destination.
- Never hike alone.
- Be prepared for your chosen hike.

If you become lost:

- Do not panic.
- Stay where you are.
- Do not go downhill (even if you see the city lights).
- Use signalling devices.
- Build or seek shelter.

And always carry the 10 essentials:

- 1) Flashlight (with spare batteries and bulbs).
- 2) Firemaking kit (waterproof matches/lighter, firestarter/candle).
- 3) Whistle.
- 4) Pocket knife.
- 5) Compass and map.
- 6) Emergency shelter.
- 7) Water and food.
- 8) Hat or toque.
- 9) Extra clothes (rain gear, sweater).
- 10) First aid kit.

safety guidelines.

"Our point is this — statistics reveal some startling information," Graham said. "Last year alone there were over 360 searches and tragically 12 people died (in B.C.)."

He added: "Common sense is the key word. We've had cases on the North Shore of newcomers arriving up on Mt. Seymour with open-toed shoes and wearing cocktail dresses."

Another aspect that troubles search officials is the sense of security a cell phone affords. Rescue officials fear that they are being looked on as a BCAA-type service for the outdoors. In other words, if you get lost, give them a call.

For the North Shore Rescue's Dave Brewer, such sentiments are the precise reason that the new outdoor safety guideline program is

1995/96 B.C. Search & Rescue Statistics*

THE TOP TEN CATEGORIES REQUIRING SEARCH/RESCUE	SEARCHES REQUIRED	INJURED	DEAD	NOT FOUND
1. HIKERS	360	56	12	23
2. WALK AWAYS / REST HOMES	127	8	9	12
3. BOATERS	121	3	5	6
4. SNOWMOBILERS	81	11	2	1
5. HUNTERS	71	1	3	1
6. KAYAKERS	68	2	4	1
7. OFF ROAD M.V.A.	50	27	7	4
8. SKIERS / SNOW BOARDERS	48	9	1	0
9. CYCLISTS	26	7	0	0
10. MUSHROOM PICKER	22	2	1	0
TOTALS TOP 10	974	126	44	48
TOTALS ALL CATEGORIES	1023	138	53	52

*Source: Provincial Emergency Program, P.C. Statistics 1995/96



NEWS photo Terry Peters

HIKING in the mountains is one of the perks living on the North Shore allows. However, increasing usage has led to a steady increase in the number of search and rescues performed annually. New safety guidelines have now been drafted.

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