

Serious incident information: on-river resource

You've had an extremely serious incident. What next?

First, at this point you've probably already **called NPS and** possibly the **AzRA** management team. If you haven't, please make those two phone calls. If you don't have the capability to make those phone calls and you haven't initiated alternative communications, please begin using your ground to air radio (line of sight only), your signal mirrors, and consider sending a pair of hikers out.

Please keep in mind a couple of things about NPS protocols. (1) They won't ask another agency to fly outside of NPS weather parameters—e.g., they won't ask DPS to come in during a rain storm they don't feel safe to fly in in the first place. Their rules are more restrictive than those of Guardian and DPS. (Contact MOD if this needs to be escalated.) (2) Once an incident moves from an injury to a fatality, responding to your trip becomes less of a priority for the NPS. This is part of their triage protocols. (3) If you're dealing with a fatality and it's late in the day or at night, you will likely have to keep the deceased overnight.

Second, please try to **preserve the scene** as best you can. Do not move things or try to "tidy" the scene. (If you have to keep a scene overnight and it's impacting other guests, use your best judgment as to what to preserve and be respectful in handling any remains to your comfort level.) Keep all evidence, such as packets of medication or prescriptions.

Third, if the incident is truly serious, **prepare the crew and the guests for** the National Park Service to send in **a law enforcement investigator**. This is standard NPS policy for all fatalities and serious incidents. NPS will likely separate crew members and involved individuals for interviews—again, creating a private space for people to be able to talk with the investigator is NPS policy. Although you have probably been through many medical evacuations before, NPS response will be significantly more formal and detailed than you've experienced in prior situations.

Serious incident information: on-river resource cont.

Fourth, if you have a fatality or serious injury, **identification** will be requested and will likely be sent out with the body or the injured guest. This will help expedite the situation for the family.

Fifth, depending on the circumstance, we will try to get some sort of **counselor involved**—either flying into the trip or at the take-out.

Sixth, as soon as the situation is well under control, please begin having all crew members, involved guests, and guests with strong opinions (positive or negative) **write first person narrative statements** of what happened. It's important for those to be accurate, thorough, and as soon after the incident as possible. Each of you will have different perspective and memories of the incident, so it's pretty typical to have statements from various individuals that don't quite mesh—that's OK. (Don't pre-compare notes.)

Seventh, please **separate** any evacuated guest's (or remains') **belongings**. This includes sleeping bags, tents, and pads. (Some of our warehouse staff may have religious reasons for not coming in contact with that gear.)