

Spring Has Arrived!

People come from all around to enjoy the variety of recreations available here in the Columbia River Gorge. As you may have noticed, the trailhead parking lots are often full with cars spilling out onto roadsides. One example is the Coyote Wall area at the bottom of Courtney Road, where this happens frequently, with many cars parked on the shoulders of Highway 14 and Courtney Road. These parking hazards combined with more drivers on the road looking to recreate, along with more people outside trying to enjoy the nicer weather, are a recipe for more accidents to happen.

Besides traffic accidents, the calls for an ambulance start to increase and continue through summer and into the fall months. These calls are often related to people being ill-prepared for the unpredictable weather conditions and terrain they come upon. Another factor is that their fitness level isn't always what they thought it was, or they slip and fall, trip and twist an ankle, or sometimes things just don't go as planned.

Depending on the location of these seasonal emergency calls, it may require a combined effort to get someone rescued from the predicaments we are all capable of getting ourselves into. Sometimes finding the location of a person, especially if they are not on a path, can be difficult. To complicate matters, cell service can be spotty in the Gorge. When called for a trail rescue, depending on the terrain and the type of accident or injury, local fire department(s) are dispatched along with the KCEMS1 ambulance. Search and Rescue (SAR) may be dispatched if needed, and Life Flight is sometimes necessary to transport a more critical patient. The rafting companies offer their assistance for river rescues. In extreme situations, we have also used the assistance of the military to rescue injured people in very difficult terrain. If you see multiple agencies responding to the same recreational area, it is most likely a rescue situation.

Spring also brings with it pollen, so we see more asthma and breathing difficulties. Bee stings and anaphylaxis are more frequent, too. We recommend that people carry their prescribed rescue inhalers and epi-pens with them and check to see that they are not expired.

We at KCEMS want everyone who lives or visits here to have the best recreational experiences. A few springtime safety tips are listed below. Enjoy the coming of warmer weather and be safe out there!

KCEMS1 Safety Tips: Remember to look out for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorcyclists when on the road. It can be difficult to see them with added people in our area. Make sure you have the right shoes for your recreating, and always have enough water with you. Watch for slippery rocks when at the rivers, and we recommend wearing a life jacket when near, in, or on the many rivers and lakes in our area. Children 12 years old and younger must wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket at all times when underway in a vessel less than 19 feet in length, unless they are in a fully enclosed area. Also, remember to wear your safety gear when operating any power equipment such as lawnmowers, trimmers, chainsaws, and similar equipment. Accidents do happen, but we can prevent harm to ourselves or others if we take the time. Plan your outings, prevent accidents, practice safety with all activities, and play in this great place we are lucky enough to call home!

KCEMS1 Fun Facts: KCEMS1 has nine crews of two people consisting of a Paramedic and an EMT. We vary in age from early 20s to mid-60s. We have many years of combined experience, with our longest-employed person having been in this field for over 48 years. We have 11 men and seven women. We work as a team; we all train together, and we often socialize and recreate together. We live at our stations with our Paramedic or EMT partner for two full days and sometimes three days out of every six

days. A full third of our lives are spent away from home and at one of our three stations.
And the most fun fact of all: we love our job!