



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Teton  
National Park

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## Grand Teton National Park News Release

### **Backcountry Hiker Rescued by Helicopter from Granite Canyon**

Grand Teton National Park rangers used an interagency contract helicopter to rescue a solo female hiker from Granite Canyon on Friday afternoon, July 6. Carol Tolan, age 66, a seasonal resident of the Teton Village area of Jackson Hole, Wyoming, began to suffer symptoms of heat exhaustion and used her cell phone to call for assistance when she could not continue walking out of Granite Canyon on her own.

Teton Interagency Dispatch Center received a call from the Teton County sheriff's office about three o'clock Friday afternoon, reporting a 911 cell phone call from a hiker in distress on the Granite Canyon trail. Tolan had called to report that she was nauseous and unable to walk further. She was also slightly disoriented and describing characteristic symptoms of heat stress. Two park rangers immediately began hiking into Granite Canyon by foot and located Tolan about four miles from the Granite Canyon trailhead. Because her condition deteriorated after rangers reached her, an interagency helicopter was summoned to expedite an evacuation.

Rangers used the short-haul rescue technique to quickly transport Tolan from the canyon trail via helicopter to a waiting park ambulance at the Granite Canyon Entrance Station on the Moose-Wilson Road. The park ambulance then transported Tolan to St. John's Medical Center in Jackson for treatment.

The short-haul rescue technique allows park rangers the opportunity to airlift a patient from a remote backcountry location to a landing zone where further emergency medical care can be administered before final transport to a nearby hospital or medical center. The technique involves placing a patient into either a body harness or rescue litter (basket) which is attached to the helicopter by a double rope system; the patient is then airlifted while being suspended below the helicopter for a short flight to another landing spot where the ship can safely touch down or place the patient for additional assistance by rescue personnel.

Rangers advise that backcountry users refrain from overexertion, especially during the current hot and dry weather conditions. Visitors to the park's backcountry are reminded to carry plenty of water and stay properly hydrated. Becoming acclimatized to high elevations is often accompanied by fluid loss; therefore, hikers should drink at least 3-4 quarts of fluid per day to keep themselves hydrated. In addition, hikers should eat high energy snacks to increase their stamina. Signs of heat stress include: heavy perspiration, muscle weakness, fatigue, collapse, headache, and/or confusion—largely as a result of the loss of fluids and electrolyte imbalances (i.e. loss of sodium).

This marks the sixth major search and rescue operation this year in Grand Teton National Park, and the second rescue in two days time involving hikers who were overcome by the effects of heat, dehydration, overexertion or altitude.

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