**Mount Rainier Hall SAIT/Board of Review**

**Frequently Asked Question**

**Q: What is a Serious Accident Investigation Team (SAIT)?**

A: A Serious Accident Investigation Team is established any time there is an incident involving National Park Service (NPS) employees or other employees, contractors or volunteers under NPS supervision and jurisdiction (e.g. volunteers, SCA, emergency workers, etc.) that results in a work-related fatality, hospitalization of three or more people or federal property damage of $250,000 or more. The SAIT’s purpose is to identify the factual events leading to the incident, identify the direct, contributory, and root causes, and provide recommended corrective actions to prevent recurrence.

**Q: What is a Board of Review (BOR)?**

A: A Board of Review is a management body convened to deliberate the SAIT findings and recommendations and determine what and how to implement. BORs objectively review significant law enforcement actions or incidents as they relate to the effectiveness of the policies, equipment, and training practices of the bureau, and then make recommendations for the entire bureau. It serves the same function (and may otherwise be known) as an “incident critique,” “incident review,” or “after-action review.” A Board of Review is not a fault-finding exercise and is not focused on the actions or conduct of individuals.

**Q: What is the difference between a SAIT and a BOR?**

A: A SAIT is usually composed of staff with technical expertise related to the incident to conduct the initial on the ground investigation and develop a draft factual report. A BOR is usually composed of management officials with the authority to review the SAIT findings and recommendations and determine what and how to implement.

**Q: What were the findings?**

A: The SAIT’s investigation determined Nick died because he was not anchored with fall protection during the rescue. Nick lost his balance and fell to his death while unhooking a litter from beneath a hovering helicopter. The SAIT further determined that Nick was not wearing fall protection likely because of a common human tendency known as “normalization of risk” which in layman’s terms is when people become desensitized to the risk around them.

To address the primary causes of the accident, the Board recommended establishment of a region-wide assessment program for high risk operational programs (e.g., aviation, boating/diving safety). Additionally, at the park level, the Board recommended development and implementation of fall protection protocols and standard operating procedures, a park Search and Rescue Plan and peer-reviewed training and reinforcement plan for core mountaineering/rescuer skills, aviation, operational leadership and incident command system.