

For Immediate Release – August 11, 2009
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Visitor Dies After Over Fifty-Foot Fall in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

19-year-old Kevin Trevor Rodriguez was pronounced dead at approximately 4pm on Monday, August 10, 2009 after sustaining severe head injuries following a 50+ foot fall near Tokopah Falls. Mr. Rodriguez was visiting from near Malibu, California.

Incident reports state that Rodriguez and a friend were scrambling on the rocks above the trail when the accident occurred. Instead of climbing down in the same location as they had ascended, they attempted to descend via what appeared to be an easier route. While less steep, the rocks they chose to descend were made slippery by water passing over them during normal high water, and Rodriguez took a tumbling fall, landing in a small pool below. Rodriguez's travelling companions and bystanders attempted CPR for approximately 45 minutes. Park medics arriving on-scene attempted an additional 15 minutes of CPR before Rodriguez was pronounced dead.

Visitors are reminded that rocks can be slippery and treacherous, even if they appear to be dry. Additionally, injuries, rescues, and fatalities occur often when a down-climb is more difficult or impossible than it appeared from the ground. Visitors are warned to use extreme caution when scrambling or climbing in the park.

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