

Two skiers killed in B.C. avalanche

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GOLDEN, B.C. — Tragedy has struck Kicking Horse Mountain Resort and the town of Golden, B.C., again after two men were killed by an avalanche while skiing in-bounds Saturday.

RCMP Sergeant Marko Shehovac said four people were caught in the slide that occurred about 2:30 p.m.

"Two people were able to get out, two males are deceased," said Sgt. Shehovac.

The two men who were able to escape were not related to the other men.

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CTV Video: Two skiers dead in B.C. avalanche

Avalanche kills two people at the Kicking Horse Resort in Golden, B.C.

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"They just happened to be in the same area," said the officer, adding RCMP were notified after witnesses reported the avalanche.

"Some people saw it happen and were able to report it to the ski hill," he said.

The avalanche comes a little more than a week after Quebecker Gilles Blackburn, 51, was rescued from the back country where he spent nine days lost in the wilderness after he and his wife Marie-Josée Fortin, 44, skied out of bounds from the resort.

Mounties have admitted errors were made in not launching a search sooner after multiple sightings of Mr. Blackburn's SOS signs were ignored.

Ms. Fortin died before the couple could be rescued.

The resort issued a statement shortly after the deaths Saturday saying the RCMP Operation Control Centre received a 911 call reporting the avalanche just north of the resort.

At approximately 2:25 p.m. the resort personnel determined that the avalanche had taken place in what is known as a permanent avalanche closure, within the controlled recreation area of the resort.

Resort personnel in collaboration with Golden search and rescue and the RCMP determined that the avalanche was triggered by the skiers and a search was immediately launched.

At approximately 2:59 p.m. the first skier was located and uncovered. At approximately 3:04 p.m. the second skier was located and uncovered by the search team.

Both were flown by helicopter from the accident scene to the Golden District hospital.

Jennifer Henkes, spokeswoman for Golden hospital, said a third man was taken to hospital to be treated for undisclosed injuries.

Calgarian Kevin Hall was skiing at Kicking Horse when the deadly slide occurred.

"The first thing it did for us was just send an absolute shiver up our spine because it was an area that we had been skiing," he said.

"People that we were talking to in the lineup around the base of the chair, there was just surprise and shock with regards to what had happened.

"But there was no anger there, there was obviously an appreciation for the response from the hill ... and concern for the people that had been caught in the avalanche."

The ages and identities of the victims have not been released.

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