

Avalanche claims 23-year-old snowmobiler

Man is 12th to die in avalanches this season

Kelly Sinoski, Canwest News Service
Published: Saturday, February 02, 2008

A 23-year-old snowmobiler is dead following an avalanche about 300 kilometres southwest of Calgary in a small East Kootenay town of Elkford on Friday -- the seventh such fatality in B.C. this season.

The man was riding with nine others in the Crossing Creek or KoKo Claims Trail area, when an avalanche struck at about 4 p.m., killing one of the group, paramedic Lynn Bobak said.

Elkford RCMP said the man had been in a bowl area known as the Tundra, and triggered the avalanche on himself.

"Rescuers on scene were able to locate the male within minutes using avalanche transceivers, but then struggled to remove him as he was found buried approximately two metres beneath the snow and trapped under his snowmobile," police said in a prepared release.

The man, whose name was not released, was flown to a medical clinic in Elkford, where he later died.

Ms. Bobak said avalanche conditions have been bad this year.

"It's absolutely horrible," she said. "There's no base to the snow."

Elkford, with a population of about 2,670, has an active Snowmobile Association and ATV club and prides itself on its many trails throughout the Elk Valley.

It is one of only two communities in B.C. where it is legal, with a permit issued by RCMP, to ride a snowmobile from a home or hotel in town directly onto the trails.

Mayor Dean McKerracher said the KoKo Claims areas has a "bunch of big bowls" and is popular among snowmobilers.

"Avalanches are always a risk in the backcountry and these guys know that," he said.

So far this season, there have been seven avalanche fatalities in B.C. -- including one on New Year's Day in an out-of-bounds area at Whistler and another involving two snowmobilers near 100 Mile House -- and three in Alberta.

Two of the more recent deaths occurred earlier this year near Midway and Grand Forks, about 740 kilometres southwest of Calgary.

The Canadian Avalanche Association listed the avalanche warning for the Kootenay/Boundary region as considerable Friday, and said the risk of rider-triggered avalanche activity is expected to increase as the new snow settles into a slab.

More On This Story

['Like being in a washing machine': avalanche survivor](#)

[11th avalanche victim was mentor to skiers](#)

[Skier tells how he was swept away](#)

Related Topics

[Natural Disasters](#)

[Calgary](#)

[Canadian Avalanche Association](#)

[Dean McKerracher](#)

powered by **Inform**

Story Tools

[Change font size](#)

[Print this story](#)

[E-Mail this story](#)

Share This Story

[Facebook](#)

[Digg](#)

[Stumble Upon](#)

[More](#)

Story tools presented by

