



PRESS RELEASE

March 23, 2020

Contact: Lance FitzGerald, Ouray County Sheriff
Phone: 970-325-7272
Email: lfitzgerald@ouraycountyco.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS PROMPT REQUEST TO REFRAIN FROM OUTDOOR ACTIVITY IN OURAY COUNTY

The Ouray County Sheriff's Office, in partnership with Ouray County Unified Command, requests that people do not take part in high-risk outdoor activities until further notice. Such activities may include backpacking, climbing, backcountry skiing, and other backcountry activities that put you at an elevated risk for rescue.

Outdoor recreationists may get sick, lost, or injured and require assistance. The responding rescue team of local volunteers could be forced to break social distancing and State-mandated isolation by sharing rescue equipment, radios, and vehicles. By having to respond to these type of incidents, outdoor enthusiasts could be taking those rescuers out of service for weeks due to post-mission quarantine protocols. Preventable backcountry injury also strains the response time for other critical accidents, as well as stress to the ambulance and emergency room services.

Low-risk outdoor activities are still strongly encouraged, provided those participating adhere to prescribed social distancing, personal hygiene protocols, and formulate a reliable plan for self-rescue in the event a mishap does occur.

Ouray County is experiencing typical mountain spring weather, which often brings heavy, wet snow storms, increasing the avalanche danger in the backcountry considerably.

Please do your part in preventing backcountry accidents and protecting our vital group of volunteers.

###