

north shore news

North Vancouver firefighters hoist two from canyon

Maria Spitale-Leisk / North Shore News

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file photo Cindy Goodman, North Shore News

North Vancouver firefighters rescued two young adults who injured themselves jumping from cliffs at Lynn Canyon on the B.C. Day holiday.

The first call about an injured cliff jumper in Lynn Canyon came in Monday afternoon. Firefighters found a man in his 20s with a dislocated right shoulder at the water's edge just north of the Twin Falls Bridge.

Assistant fire chief Mike Cairns said the heights in that area of the canyon can vary from 20 to 50 feet above the water.

"That's a very technical rescue where we had to set up our rope system and we lowered down a firefighter with a harness to the patient, and he was stabilized," said Cairns.

Because the man did not sustain any lower body injuries firefighters pulled him back up using a rope system while he stepped up the side of rock face. The injured man was taken to hospital by ambulance for treatment.

"Before we even completed that rescue the bridge was full again and people were jumping off both sides of the bridge," said Cairns, who cautioned the mostly young men to stop jumping, which fell on deaf ears.

"They are people that have done it before, so in their mind it's perfectly safe and so you are not going to have any success asking them or telling them not to do it."

To reach the ledge at Twin Falls, said Cairns, the thrill seekers have to climb over a fence with a sign that reads: Extreme Danger, Don't Go Behind This Point.

Another young person didn't get the warning Monday, as just after 5 p.m. firefighters were called back to the canyon to rescue a 22-year-old woman with back injuries at 90 Foot Pool, another popular jumping off point.

Firefighters decided the best course of action was to use a basket stretcher to haul the woman who was on a spine board back up to the suspension bridge deck, in what was another highly technical rescue.

“She had definitely lower back pain so it was a possible compression fracture of the lower back,” said Cairns, adding the woman was taken to hospital by ambulance.

Firefighters were kept busy Monday responding to six separate rescues on Grouse Mountain and in Lynn Canyon.

The emergency calls began at noon on Monday when District of North Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services was dispatched to the Grouse Grind to assist an injured hiker.

Less than an hour later the firefighters were called to the BCMC trail which parallels the Grind to help an elderly man who had fallen and injured his arm.

A third Grouse Mountain rescue call came in while firefighters were still on the scene, about a diabetic at the three quarter mark on the trail. That person was stabilized and able to get to the top of the Grind with some assistance.

Just before 9 p.m. they returned to the third quarter mark of the Grind to assist an approximately 30-year-old female with a heart condition.

The woman was carried by firefighters up the remainder of the Grind in a basket and assessed by advanced life support paramedics at the top.

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