

Incident Analysis

Of Volunteer-Led Programs in 2019



Appalachian Mountain Club
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Overview

2019

In 2019, the AMC received 30 incident reports from volunteer-led programs and volunteer-managed facilities. Of these, 29 were incidents, and one was considered a close call/near miss (*fig. 1*).

Of these events in 2019 (*fig. 2*),

- 1 reportedly had no impact
- 10 were minor
- 17 were moderate
- 1 was serious
- 1 was not survivable

2018

In a side-by-side comparison, findings in volunteer incident reporting from 2018 and 2019 are similar. In 2018 we received 42 incident reports from volunteer-led programs or volunteer-managed facilities. In that year, 37 were categorized as an incident and five were listed as close calls/near misses. Though they also ranged from not impactful to not survivable, the majority of incidents were found to be of moderate severity – just as we see in 2019.

Figure 1

93.63% of reported events in 2019 were considered incidents

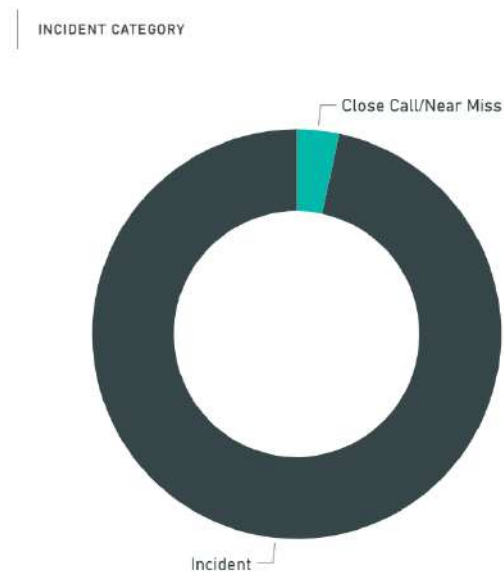
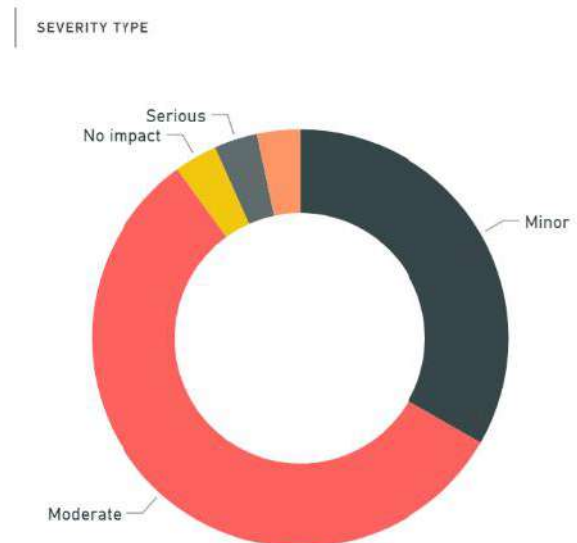


Figure 2

96.67% of 2019 events were reportedly moderate



Incident Type and Treatment

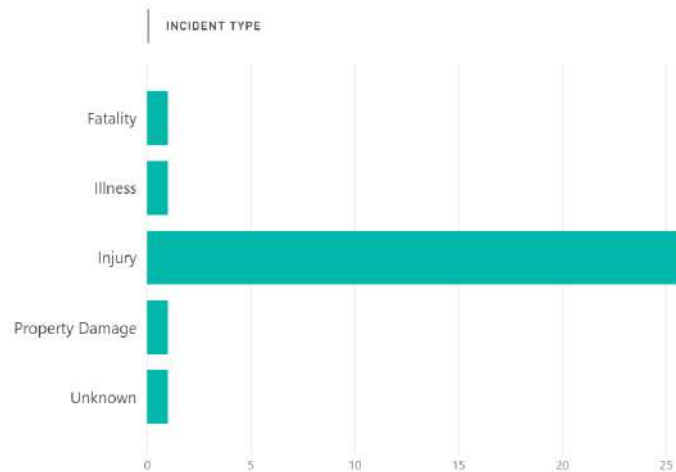
What Happened?

Out of the 29 reported events that were categorized as “incidents,” all but four described injuries to participants or guests.

Approximately 14 of the reported incidents resulted in a participant being evacuated from the activity – a majority of those cases involving a patient who was able to self-evacuate or leave with the assistance of other members of their group. At least 19 patients sought care from medical professionals as a

result of the incidents they were involved in, and at least eight reported incidents involved assistance from people or agencies outside the group to manage the situation. Fractures and sprains were the most commonly reported injuries.

Figure 3

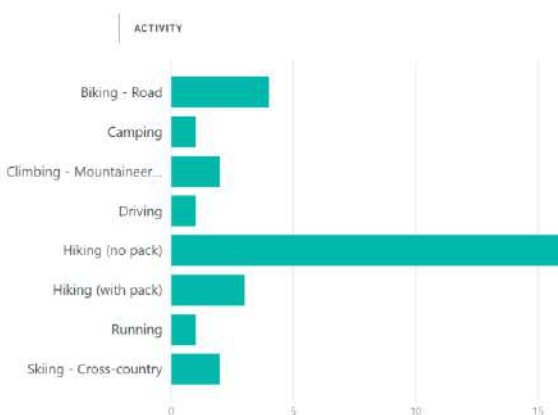


Activities and Contributing Factors

Which Activities Lead to the Most Incidents?

The wide majority of reported incidents in 2019 occurred while people were day-hiking. It is important to

Figure 4



bear in mind that this is not necessarily an indicator that this is a higher-risk activity inherently, as these numbers are impacted by the volume of day hike activities offered through our volunteer-led programs and at our volunteer-managed facilities. In 2019 there were over 3,500 day-hike offerings from the AMC volunteer community. Conversely, the same logic does highlight road biking as one of the riskier activities we engage

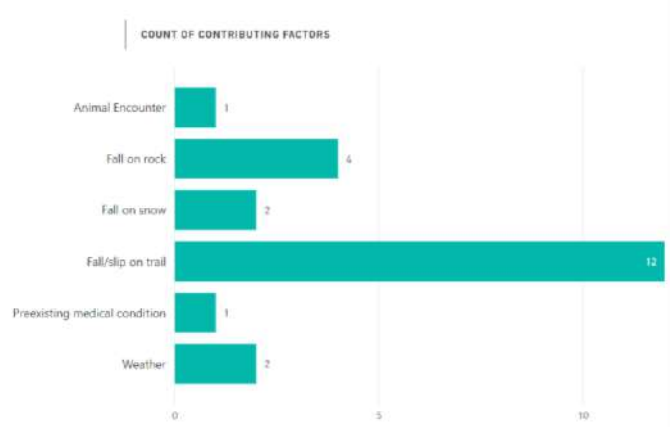
in, since the volume of trips offered is significantly lower (just under 650 offerings from the AMC volunteer community in 2019), and the rate of incidents in this activity was the second highest out of all those activities where incidents were reported as occurring.

What Factors Contribute to the Most Incidents?

By a significant margin, the greatest contributing factors to reported incidents in 2019 were slips, trips and falls. Additionally, in cases

where weather was the primary contributing factor, it is worth noting that the incident ultimately occurred because people slipped or fell as a result of weather conditions (i.e. falling when knocked by a strong gust of wind). These fall numbers also do not accurately capture falls from bicycles (four were reported, as seen in figure 4) as there is not currently an option to select in our incident analysis platform that reflects that mechanism of injury (a change we can look to implement in 2020).

Figure 5



Conclusions and Learning Opportunities

Incident Type and Treatment

Most reported incidents result in injury. This is a great reminder of the importance of keeping up-to-date on wilderness medical training. Before going out and/or working with the public, all volunteer leaders should ensure that their first aid kits are fully stocked and they have a clear plan for what they will do should the need for medical assistance arise (nearest hospitals and medical centers, a means of communication, fastest routes to assistance, etc.). More than one group that reported an incident had a medical professional among their number who was able to step in and offer further assistance and advice. Awareness and use of the resources in a group is also important.

Activities and Contributing Factors

Risk is inherently a part of the activities that the AMC is inviting the public to engage in. As a leader or facility volunteer briefs participants or guests on what to expect, it is often a tendency to think of big-picture risks, however the data clearly show that simple slips, trips and falls are key risks to cover. While accidents do occur, the AMC community can promote taking care and using traction and equipment effectively to help mitigate these issues.

Overall Reflections

In reviewing 2019, there appears to be a gap in communication based on the number of incident reports received. The AMC offered over 6,000 volunteer-led activities in this calendar year and received just 30 reports of incidents. Of our 12 chapters, five did not submit any reports of incidents in 2019, and of four volunteer-managed camps and cabins only one submitted any incident reports. Whether because there are barriers to opening this communication, a culture of reporting hasn't been established yet, or another cause: it would benefit the AMC to ensure that people across the community are being diligent about submitting these reports. Good risk management stems from clear understanding of the risks we face and the ability to learn from the experiences of our cohort.