

Death Valley National Park

News Release - **UPDATED**

Release Date: July 20, 2023
Contact: Abby Wines (NPS), 760-786-3221, abby_wines@nps.gov
Darcy Ellis (Inyo County), dellis@inyocounty.us

Man dies at Golden Canyon trailhead; Heat may have been a factor in his death

UPDATE: The Inyo County Coroner has identified the man who died at the Golden Canyon trailhead in Death Valley National Park on Tuesday afternoon as 71-year-old Steve Curry of the Sunland neighborhood of Los Angeles.

Curry collapsed shortly after 3:30 p.m. outside the restroom at Golden Canyon amid temperatures that had soared to 121°F. Hours earlier, Curry had been interviewed at Zabriskie Point by a reporter with the Los Angeles Times. He was photographed slathered in sunscreen and huddled beneath a metal interpretive sign that afforded a small amount of shade. According to the article, he had hiked there from Golden Canyon – a distance of about two miles. At some point, Curry left the popular tourist destination and hiked back to the Golden Canyon trailhead, where he had left his car.

Other park visitors near the restroom noticed Curry and were able to use their cell phone to call 911 for assistance at 3:40 pm. National Park Service and Inyo County Sheriff's Office responded. Mercy Air's helicopter was not able to respond due to the high temperature. Park rangers arrived at 3:47. They did CPR and used an automated external defibrillator (AED) but were not able to save the man.

The Inyo County Coroner's Office has not yet determined Curry's cause of death. However, park rangers suspect heat was a factor. The official temperature at nearby Furnace Creek was 121°F around the time of his death. Actual temperatures inside Golden Canyon were likely much higher, due to canyon walls radiating the sun's heat.

Park rangers encourage people to visit Death Valley safely in the summer by sightseeing short distances from their air-conditioned cars or hiking in the park's cooler mountains. They do not recommend hiking at low elevations after 10:00 am.

This is possibly the second heat-related fatality in Death Valley this summer. A 65-year-old [man died on July 3](#).

According to the National Weather Service, Death Valley has experienced 28 days of temperatures in excess of 110 degrees this year. Heat stroke sets in when the body's core temperature rises above 104 degrees. Classic signs of heat stroke include throbbing headache; dizziness and light-headedness; lack of sweating despite the heat; red, hot, and dry skin; muscle weakness or cramps; nausea and vomiting; rapid heartbeat (either strong

or weak); rapid, shallow breathing; behavioral changes such as confusion, disorientation, or staggering; seizures; and unconsciousness. Seek immediate medical help if heat stroke is suspected.

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Death Valley National Park is the homeland of the Timbisha Shoshone and preserves natural resources, cultural resources, exceptional wilderness, scenery, and learning experiences within the nation's largest conserved desert landscape and some of the most extreme climate and topographic conditions on the planet. Learn more at www.nps.gov/deva.