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Onion Valley Avalanche SAR

ONION VALLEY (above Independence), CA. April 29, 2020 – Shortly after 11:00am Inyo County Sheriff's Dispatch received notification of an avalanche in the Onion Valley area. Inyo County Sheriff Jeff Hollowell and Sheriff's Office Deputies were first to arrive on scene and provided first aid to the patients until the Inyo Search and Rescue team arrived.

Further information revealed that two individuals from the Tahoe area came to Onion Valley to rock-climb and ski. The male/female pair set out around 9:30am to ascend, then ski a prominent canyon on the northeast side of Independence Peak, near the Kearsarge trailhead. After climbing for several hours they heard, then saw, an approaching avalanche. Both were caught up in the moving snow; the male skier was able to grab some rocks until the snow passed, while the female was carried out of sight down the canyon.

After the avalanche passed the male skier who maintained stabilization moved down the canyon and located his partner. Unfortunately her injuries were too severe for her to be carried out. CHP Central Division Air Operations (H-40) inserted one Inyo SAR member to the location, and the patient was hoisted by helicopter and flown to Southern Inyo Hospital for treatment.

As a reminder Inyo SAR and the Inyo County Sheriff's Office have released an official request for the recreating public to adhere to the current CA Stay at Home Order, and not participate in [high-risk outdoor activities](#). If you get sick, lost or injured and require SAR assistance, the responding team of volunteers will have to break social distancing and State mandated Stay at Home Order by sharing rescue equipment, radios, and vehicles. You will be potentially taking those rescuers out of service for weeks due to post-mission quarantine protocols.

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