

Missing snowboarder found alive at Heavenly

Updated: 9:35am.

By Kathryn Reed

The snowboarder who went missing at Heavenly Mountain Resort on New Year's Eve was located about 2:30am New Year's Day, according to resort officials.

"He ducked the rope off Canyon chair, which we obviously don't recommend or condone. That is what we have backcountry gates for," Russ Pecoraro, Heavenly spokesman, told *Lake Tahoe News* Saturday morning.

El Dorado County sheriff's search and rescue crews on snowmobiles located the individual. The sheriff's department is the lead agency, not the resort. Law enforcement continues not to return phone calls.

The male, whose age and hometown are unknown, was found in High Meadow curled up in a ball. He was brought to a road where medics from Lake Valley Fire Department assessed him. According to fire officials, the snowboarder refused treatment and did not want to be transported to a hospital.

With snow starting to fall early this morning in the basin and overnight lows in single digits, it's possible this could have been a recovery instead of a rescue.

About 6 inches have fallen at lake level on the South Shore as of 8:30am.

Ski conditions outside designated trails are precarious because of the amount of snow that has fallen this season as well as the temperatures and consistency of the snow.

For those venturing in the backcountry, be sure to check with the Sierra Avalanche Center for current conditions. Today is rated moderate.

With storms coming one right after another, it makes it difficult for rescuers to find a missing person. This is because tracks get covered, conditions prohibit crews from going out and the missing person is not likely to be equipped to cope with such conditions for an extended period of time. Lake Tahoe had its first fatality of the season this week when a snowboarder was found in a tree well at Alpine Meadows.

A winter weather advisory remains in effect until 10 this morning. Snow is expected to taper off this afternoon, with another storm rolling in Sunday.