

Skiers forced to rappel from Kirkwood chairlift

By Kathryn Reed

For the second week in a row Kirkwood Mountain Resort ski patrollers were tested. Saturday skiers had to evacuate Cornice chairlift because it derailed.

No one was injured in the afternoon incident that took nearly two hours for everyone to rappel from the lift to the slope.

Resort spokesman Michael Dalzell said no one was injured when the lift, which goes to the top of the mountain, came to an abrupt stop at 1:30pm April 7.

Last Sunday it was an inbound avalanche that caused the entire resort to close for the day.

Dalzell said crews on Saturday night were still inspecting the cable.

"We're not likely to spin the chairlift (Sunday)," Dalzell told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Ski patrol simultaneously worked both ends of the chairlift to bring people down. Dalzell said everyone was calm during the evacuation.

He did not know what the highest point was for someone to rappel down, but this is an advanced lift that in places is at least 50 feet off the ground in places. Dalzell also didn't know how many people had to be evacuated.

The cause of the derailment was the air bag from the terrain park being launched by a gust of wind into the cable of Chair 6. The air bag is something people can jump into as they learn tricks in the park. This is the first season it has been used

at the resort.