

Avalanche deaths soar in the West

By Doyle Rice, USA Today

Several “big and dangerous” avalanches took a toll on skiers, snowboarders and snowmobilers in the western USA this month, making January the deadliest month on the mountains since 2008.

January is typically the month with the most avalanche fatalities in the U.S., but this January proved worse than normal, with 11 people killed, according to the Colorado Avalanche Information Center, which tracks fatalities and accidents nationwide. Last weekend, avalanches killed four people. Overall, 14 people have died in snow slides this winter, all in the western U.S.

The 11 fatalities in this month is the largest number of deaths in January since 2008, when 19 people died in avalanches. Last year, one person died during a warm, practically snow-free January.

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