

There's no such thing as sidecountry

By Sage Sauerbrey, Moonshine Ink

Anyone who has spent a reasonable amount of time in the mountains can probably remember at least a few times when they made a real bonehead move and got lucky.

Even though the "sidecountry" – the out of bounds area surrounding a ski resort – may give the illusion of safety due to its proximity to controlled terrain, there have actually been more avalanche fatalities in the California "sidecountry" over the last 60 years than in the backcountry.

"It's a false sense of security, I think," said Randall Osterhuber, director of Donner Summit Avalanche Seminars. "You're either in the backcountry or you're not; you're either on one side of the rope line at the ski area or you're not."

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