

An accident waiting to happen



The Underlying Cause

Introduction

- Underlying cause less obvious
- Only 20% of accidents technical cause
- Other 80% is human error
- After many incidents follows a serious (fatal) accident

The difference between an incident and an accident is just luck

Goals

1. No embarrassment
2. Culture change
3. Prevention through reporting of near misses (or near hits?)

Case 1

Date:

June 2015

Location:

Liechtenstein
about 2500 m asl

Temperature:

about 15 C

Mountain:

rock with snow
fields

Activator:

Geert PA7ZEE



Case 1 – The Story

- Left home below sealevel
- Walked next day to Pfälzerhütte
- Suprised at snowfields
- Altitude sickness
- Slipped and slided down the mountain side
- Got to the hut safely
- Day after no problems on the trail to Malbun



Case 1 - Lessons

- Insufficiently prepared
 - Not adjusted to the environment
 - Snowfields were a surprise
- Gave in to the seductive power of points over reason

Case 2

Date:

March 2017

Location:

Gran Canaria Island
about 1100m asl

Temperature:

about 32 C

Mountain:

Volcanic rough
terrain with steep
parts

Activator:

Victor GI4ONL



Case 2 – The Story

- Victor is a very experienced activator
- Well equipped with i.e. a satellite telephone and -navigation
- Sudden temperature rise to over 30 C
- First E-mail “it is very hot”
- Second E-mail “I am fallen and don’t know what to do”
- Had treated himself with first aid

Case 2 – The story (2)

- Victor did not know the local emergency telephone number
- After alerting 112, the emergency services got in contact with Victor
- Victor asked for helicopter and gave position
- Helicopter was present within 15 minutes
- Medical examination at Las Palmas Airport



Case 2 - Causes

What went wrong?

Not the loose stone that caused the fall

Underlying Causes

- Lack of acclimatisation to the temperature rise
- Underestimation of summit difficulty due to overestimation of ability

Conclusions

- Underlying cause vs. Direct cause
- A fatal accident requires many incidents
- Reporting of incidents prevents accidents

Recommendations

- Report your incidents on SOTA Reflector
- Abort activation after some incidents
- Know your limits

Because

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