

AIRFLARE – THE NEW WINTER SAFETY APP for SKIERS

SAN FRANCISCO, CA - Every winter season, millions of individuals and families enjoy time out on the slopes. While most outings are enjoyed incident free, the nature of skiing and boarding does have inherent risks. The most common are the minor inconvenience and stress of a separated party member, to the more significant dangers posed by tree wells or becoming lost while chasing powder beyond resort boundaries.

To address these risks, a new tool is making its way onto the scene at several mountain resorts across the United States. AirFlare, an app downloaded to a mobile phone, enables friends, family and search teams to pinpoint the location of skiers and outdoor enthusiasts of all types if they become lost or injured and need help.

AirFlare began on the simple idea that the vast majority of people who adventure outside do so with a mobile phone. In the outdoors, mobile phones are used as a camera, trip planner, GPS device and backup flashlight. Why can't phones do more to help us if we ever become lost or missing and in need of assistance on an outdoor adventure?

According to Denis Lee, AirFlare's co-founder, the AirFlare journey began when a friend failed to return from a winter outing in the mountains of Washington State. He had a personal locator device with him, but had an accident that prevented him from activating it. As avid adventurers, the AirFlare team was already familiar with various beacon and satellite communication devices available and realized they served a niche market. Beyond the added cost and weight of these specialized devices, they often were not a practical fit for the way so many people recreate outside.

According to Lee, "I saw a lot of the already available rescue technologies out on extended backpacking trips and alpine expeditions, but noticed they often didn't make the gear list for a casual hike or a day out mountain biking. We

built AirFlare for the everyday adventurer," Lee said.

The idea was simple. Leverage the powerful technology you likely already have in your pocket to help friends, loved ones and search teams locate you if you need help. "Our vision was to build an app that could conceptually be downloaded to every outdoor adventurer's phone because of its low cost and simplicity," Lee said. "We designed it to be extremely power conscious, and most importantly, to require no user action. So many people go on outdoor adventures alone, and we wanted AirFlare to be able to help them if they ever got into a situation where they couldn't help themselves. That's what started all of this, really."

AirFlare provides powerful location sharing features to help keep families and groups safe. If you are out skiing for the day with friends, for example, within a few seconds you can connect all the phones in the group, and if someone gets separated, a simple push of a button will display their location on a map and provide the ability for you to navigate to them.

The real power of AirFlare though is in the event you become the subject of a rescue by a search team. AirFlare's search technology was adopted by several mountain resorts last year, providing ski patrol a suite of powerful search tools to add to their toolbox. At Jay Peak, Vermont, for example: "Ski Patrol concluded another successful search yesterday. Three young customers ventured beyond the resort boundary. AirFlare was used successfully to determine their location, and with some coaching by phone, the group was able to struggle back to the base area under their own power."

At Powder Mountain, Utah, a call came in coincidentally during AirFlare onboarding training. The injured skier, with a suspected broken jaw, was confused about their location. Dispatch sent a Location Request to the skier, and their coordinates were successfully returned. It was revealed that the

skier was a mile from their originally reported location. After receiving accurate coordinates using AirFlare, patrol was able to be deployed to the injured skier's exact location.

AirFlare's flagship feature, though, is the ability to discover an AirFlare enabled phone outside of cell service. "That's really important to us," Lee said. "While most emergencies happen inside cell service, there's a lot that happen where cell service isn't available. Our vision was to develop a well-rounded suite of tools that can locate lost adventurers in either environment."

So, what are the next steps for AirFlare? According to Lee, AirFlare was designed from the beginning to be broadly applicable to outdoor enthusiasts across multiple outdoor disciplines, but the immediate predominant focus is the mountain resort community. "It's just a really powerful set of tools that serve that community quite well. We're excited to be in partnership with Bern Helmets this year and excited to see early interest from several mountain resorts so far this winter. We're going to make inroads into the snowmobiling community this season, we're looking at opportunities in the mountain biking space in the spring, and we're even exploring possibilities to add value in the Alzheimer's, Dementia and Autism community. This winter our main focus is to get our technology out to the skier and boarder community and to ski patrol teams to help keep people safe and help get them found if they get into trouble."

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For more information, visit AirFlare at airflare.com, or on the App Store or Google Play.

AirFlare was recently credited with saving a life of a stranded skier in Idaho, read more at airflare.com/life-save

Please see their ad on the back of the cover page and scan the QR code for a special deal with a free six-month trial.

MOUNTAIN SPORTS CLUB SAVES YOU MONEY on the SLOPES

BOULDER, CO – Mountain Sports Club is an online service where skiers, snowboarders, mountain bikers, rafters and general outdoor enthusiasts can print personalized coupons and save on lift tickets, lodging, bike parks, activities, travel bookings and shopping at online and offline retailers and suppliers across North America.

Premium members enjoy BOGO/2 for 1 Lift Tickets and daily savings at resorts throughout North America all year. Bike parks, rafting and activity offers provide savings all year. Your membership is good for one year and in each season. Mountain Sports Club is entering its 17th season providing value and savings for mountain sports enthusiasts. Discounts are available at resorts and areas from coast to coast.

In recent years, it has developed more year-round offers because skiers and snowboarders visit and play in the mountains all year. From small local areas to destination resorts, there are many options for members to save on their next mountain visit.

The premium Mountain Sports Club membership is a great complement to the many season pass options. Available are lodging, gear, shop offers and activities in the towns where passes and multi area passes are valid. The membership is a

great stand-alone service for beginners and those returning skiers/snowboarders who are not sure how often they will get out to the mountain. With lift ticket prices soaring to the \$300 mark in certain areas, and membership cost under the price of a modest priced lift ticket, one only needs to use the membership once to pay for the membership price. Early season memberships are as low as \$15 and there is a 2-year option for only \$25. Next price increase will be Nov. 15 and will keep increasing as more areas open. In season, the cost is \$60 annually.

Some of the offers are valid every day with no restrictions while some areas black out holiday and peak periods. While many of the larger multi-area pass resorts do not offer lift ticket discounts as they push more pass sales, Mountain Sports Club works to make sure there are lodging, shop and activity discounts in the respective towns to provide value not covered by many of the passes.

The Mountain Sports Club membership is an affordable alternative, offering infrequent participants more access to more areas with a significantly lower price of entry. Some of the offers simply require using a promotion code when making a purchase while others require presenting the voucher/coupon when redeeming with a valid ID. There is also the Premium plus

option where there is a one-day lift ticket included with membership in select areas. These are limited and sell out quickly.

As an online service, the Mountain Sports Club is consistently adding new vendor partners throughout the year and updating members on these new offers via the email newsletter and on social channels. Recently it has started to expand to some European and international destinations and expect this to grow. A discount on equipment from sponsors is also a unique offering that continues to grow and expand. Shop discounts include savings on tunes, service, gear, rentals and more. Members also receive special emails from partners with unique offers targeting members.

Be sure to visit www.mountainsportsclub.com to review the many discounts and offers. Look in the upper right hand corner for purchase a membership to get your membership now. Stay in touch by following on different social channels as well. Use the membership once and it is paid for, use it often and save hundreds.

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To learn more on how to save money on the slopes, please visit them at: www.mountainsportsclub.com

THE MOUNTAIN JOURNAL

REFINED POLE USE ENHANCES PERFORMANCE

By TONY CRESPI, SKIER NEWS' TECHNICAL EDITOR

One of the more complex challenges facing skiers involves the correct use and timing of poles. Honestly, do we need poles? Snowboarders, after all, do not use poles. In truth, poles can help propel us from one place to the next; poles are key to stabilization; and they provide an important aid in balance and timing.

Still, skiers often struggle with pole swing. Pardon the pun, let us get a grip on our poles.

Consider that on the one hand, poles serve as extensions of our arms and hands. In this way, poles help us establish sensitivity with the snow, provide feedback and input on snow conditions and help us refine balance and flow much as a cane can enhance sensory input and timing for a person with visual deficits.

Still, which pole should we swing for each turn? Should we forcefully jab the snow with our poles or keep our pole swing light? Should we swing the poles with the entire upper body, use our arms or use our wrist? We get the picture. The questions are complex. Let us take it by the numbers.

First, generally, accomplished skiers find it most effective to hold their arms, and hands, up and forward. In other words, accomplished skiers keep hands within their vision. Do not let your hands drop to your sides.

Second, whether enjoying an intermediate or Black Diamond trail, it is helpful to keep arms relaxed and hands

up and forward.

Third, relax and realize that if your arms are relaxed, you should find other parts of your body relaxing as well. Likewise, if hands are clenched and stiff, it is likely shoulders, back, arms, and legs may be stiff. So, relax those arms.

Fourth, keep the grip light.

Finally, which pole do I swing for each turn? Swing the right pole for right turns. Swing the left pole for left turns.

Now, whether an aspiring intermediate or emerging expert, practice refining timing on less taxing terrain. Do not practice on short quick turns. Short quick turns can amplify timing difficulties. Instead, practice long graceful giant slalom-type turns.

THE SKIER'S CLINIC: CLASS IN SESSION

If pole swings are a weakness, try this sequence.

First, using a wedge position, on well-groomed terrain, practice slow turns. Match your skis together as you complete each turn. Be sure to swing the right pole for a right turn and swing the left pole for a left turn. Stop after four turns.

Now, visualize your turns in your mind's eye.

Picture keeping your arms up and forward. As you execute your turns, see yourself gradually moving progressively into more challenging turns from wedge turns to parallel turns

Remember to swing the pole as you face the fall line.

You may feel awkward and stiff as you try to refine timing and balance. Typically, when anyone learns a new skill, things regress momentarily. Regression is part of learning. One way to help alleviate the frustration and to keep things fun in advanced lessons is to enjoy a few runs without poles. In other words, remove your poles, and on smooth terrain, try skiing as if you were holding a tray. It will help alleviate frustration.

Always keep your hands up and forward.

More often than not, it takes time and practice to refine and master the correct use of poles. The very best skiers often have worked for years to refine this skill. So, remember to savor the day. More often than not, the difference between a mediocre day and a great day is attitude. Keep learning fun and remember that instructional drills are only a tool designed to enhance your pleasure.

Take a moment. Enjoy the day.

Practice. Practice. Practice.

Contributing writer Tony Crespi has served as both a Ski School Supervisor and Development Team Coach. A frequent contributor to publications throughout snow country, his column and instructional pointers are published throughout the season.

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