



## Umatilla County Sheriff's Office

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On Saturday, December 17, volunteers members of the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office (UMASAR) and [Union County Search & Rescue](#) units conducted joint winter rescue training near the Morning Creek Sno-Park. Personnel from the two units often work together during search and rescue incidents, especially those occurring near their mutual boundary such as the Tollgate area. Winter presents increased challenges to search and rescue operations. Personnel must be able to access remote locations in heavy snow and be able to extract injured persons in steep terrain while ensuring their own safety and effectiveness.

During Saturday's training, personnel practiced securing a patient into two different litter types in preparation for hauling up a steep snowy slope with a specially designed rope system. Not only does the patient need to be secure into the litter, but also needs to be kept warm and protected from the hazards encountered during the hauling operation. UMASAR searcher Daniel Gardner's daughter Mia graciously volunteered to be a victim for these operations.

Once successfully hauled to the top, the "patient" was then transferred to one of two rescue sleds designed to be pulled behind a snowmobile or tracked UTV. One of these sleds was purchased at the end of last winter by the UMASAR Foundation with funds donated almost entirely by members of the Tollgate Trailfinders Snowmobile Club. This was the first time the sled had been used. Searchers practiced loading and towing the sled with the patient snugly secured inside.

With the holidays approaching at the same time arctic weather is predicted to cause temperatures to drop below zero, members of both units want to remind winter recreationists to be properly equipped and to be safe in their winter activities. This not only includes the winter activities themselves, but also while travelling to and from areas on roads and highways. Umatilla County Sheriff's Sergeant Dwight Johnson reminds travelers, "Never assume your trip will go as planned. Always be prepared to be stranded. Have extra clothing, blankets and don't forget a charging cable for your cell phone."

More tips for safe winter travel, as well as more information about the Umatilla County Search and rescue unit, can be found on the UMASAR Foundation's website at <http://www.umasarfoundation.org/> On behalf of the Umatilla County and Union County Sheriff's Offices, we wish you a happy and safe holiday season.

