

Listed below is the procedure to follow in the event that one does not return from a hike, run, or backpacking trek, This protocol is to be used by a delegated responsible party in conjunction with an outdoor hiking itinerary (<https://bit.ly/outdooritinerary>). If an outdoor itinerary is not provided, the steps below describe what general information one will want to collect before contacting emergency services.

First and foremost, the hiking party will likely be in contact via a satellite communication device (if applicable) long before any of the below steps need to be taken. They will try to update the delegated responsible party on a possible late exit or other complications keeping the party from making the scheduled time frame. This is the best case scenario.

The steps below should only be taken into action if th e hiker(s) are more than several hours (five or more) past our predesignated exit time.

1. Initial Action - Reach out to Secondary Contacts

Hikers are overdue with no contact. Alert secondary emergency contacts.

Before leaving for a backpacking trip, the hiking party communicates to you (responsible party) their hiking itinerary. The designated return time frame arrives (eg. Sunday around 3-4 PM) and they (hikers) are seemingly overdue. Their satellite communication device is unresponsive. The unaccounted party is likely hiking out in the dark and possibly facing further complications. They (hikers) are aware that their loved ones are worried and are likely doing everything necessary to make it back to signal.

Before moving to calling professional teams (Police) please reach out to the designated individuals listed below. These are patient and understanding individuals who will likely have or be able to find crucial information regarding the unaccounted hiking parties whereabouts. It would also be beneficial that these individuals are a part of the overall search going forward since they likely spend a lot of time in the wilderness with said missing person(s).

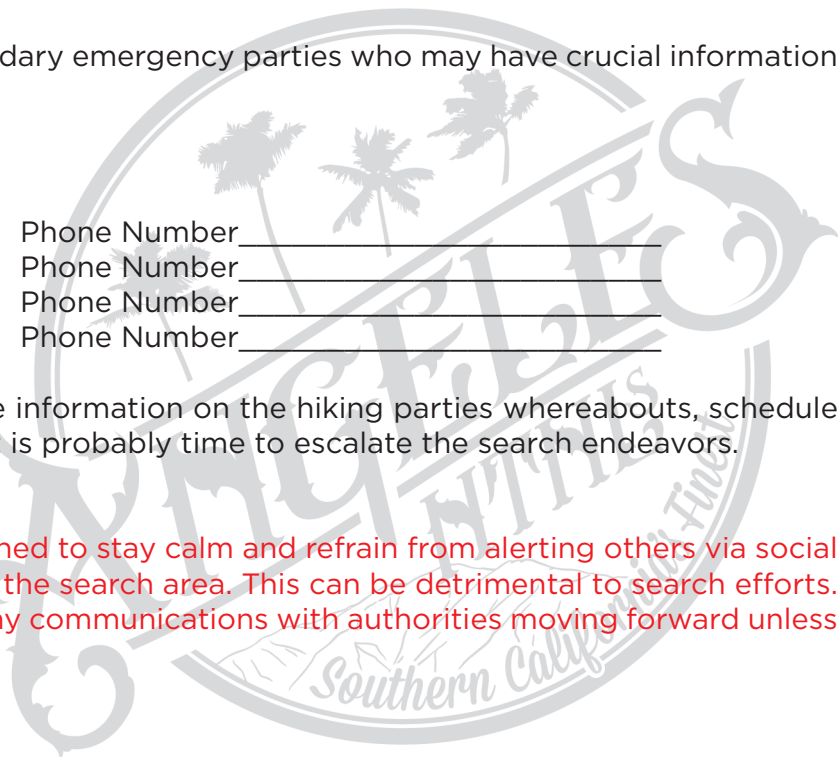
Below is the contact information of secondary emergency parties who may have crucial information in regards to the hikers whereabouts:

SECONDARY EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Name _____	Phone Number _____
Name _____	Phone Number _____
Name _____	Phone Number _____
Name _____	Phone Number _____

If none of these contacts have productive information on the hiking parties whereabouts, schedule changes or modifications to their route; it is probably time to escalate the search endeavors.

IMPORTANT Please inform anyone reached to stay calm and refrain from alerting others via social media, as it could attract more visitors to the search area. This can be detrimental to search efforts. Let them know that you will coordinate any communications with authorities moving forward unless otherwise noted.



2. Missing Hiker Information Gathering

You've reached out to the secondary contacts and still haven't achieved a sense of relief.

Now is a good time to start gathering and organizing as much information as possible. The provided hiking itinerary will be extremely helpful for this part, but here is a good place to start if you don't have one:

Trail head (starting point)

Intended goal (ie. were they ascending a mountain? Were they backpacking to a lake?)

Intended route

Vehicle Make, Model, Color, and license plate (extremely important -- Finding a vehicle will be the first step in moving toward a Search and Rescue mission)

Backup plan (if applicable)

Camping Locations and sites

Time of departure

Expected time of return

Last known location (this one is also crucial as SAR will start their search here.)

Backpack colors

Outerwear/clothing colors

General physical attribute description (ie. weight, height, hair color, eye color)

Shoe type/size

Tent color

After as much accurate information is gathered as possible, the next step is to wait. We are aware that this is extremely difficult in this time, but it is still a possibility that the hiking party is merely facing unforeseen challenges and will contact you as soon as they reach phone service. Hopefully the information gathered in the above procedure will help you make a better decision as to when to carry out step three.

3. Contact Emergency Services

You've come to the conclusion that the individual/group is likely in danger. Its time to get help.

Who You Should Contact

If at this point there is still no contact with the hiking party, it is time to alert the authorities. First, use the internet to find the nearest town to the trail head from which the hikers departed. Having this information on hand will help the operator put you in contact with the correct resources for your emergency. Call 911 if the hiking party is in the same state as you OR the corresponding Sheriff's department if the hiking party is in another state. The benefit to contacting Sheriff's Department directly is that they have the necessary communication infrastructure in place to quickly mount a search. Be patient with anyone you speak to and be prepared to repeat the information several times to additional individuals.

Once you have relayed all the collected information to the local police, they will then contact the Search and Rescue service that is assigned to whatever area the hiking party is in. They will mobilize a plan & be the absolute best bet for help. Depending on the severity, they have ground action and helicopter capabilities that work in tandem.

Stay in touch

Before hanging up with the operator, be sure to ask who is directly responsible for the search efforts. You should know who to contact to follow up with any updates. Many of the groups that will be investigating the hiking parties whereabouts are volunteers and may be putting their lives on the line to comb obscure sections of the wilderness. Any further help you can provide is crucial to getting everyone home safely.