

## Curious Hiker Survives 25-Foot Fall Down Shaft

Shorts-Clad Teen-Ager  
Remains in Mine for  
7 Hours Before Rescue

By Vince Horiuchi  
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Curiosity nearly killed a 19-year-old Sandy man who crawled into a mine shaft Saturday and plunged about 25 feet.

Adam Smolenski fell down the shaft about 8:30 a.m. while hiking in the hills near 3000 East and 11000 South in Sandy. He was rescued nearly seven hours later by Sandy Fire Department paramedics and a Salt Lake County Search and Rescue team.

The victim, who was wearing only short pants and a jacket, was flown to Alta View Hospital with a shoulder injury, a nursing supervisor said.

A firefighter also suffered minor injuries in the rescue effort.

A man and his son who were hiking in the area heard Mr. Smolenski's cries for help about 1:15 p.m.

"When we went over to the mouth of the shaft, I could hear him. I talked to him for a minute, and he told me his name and address," said Bruce Whitney, who called Mr. Smolenski's parents for help.

"We went back up there, and his father brought a rope," said Mr. Whitney.

Mr. Smolenski's mother went into the mine shaft but was unable to reach her son, said Sandy Fire Marshal Dave Meldrum.

The victim crawled past a fence, a steel plate and steel bars positioned over the entrance to get inside, said Mr. Meldrum. The shaft is about 5 feet in diameter, runs about 20 feet horizontally, then drops about 25 feet.

Before entering the mine shaft, search and rescue team members cut through the steel bars to crawl inside, said Mr. Meldrum.

Sandy firefighter Tad Norris suffered facial injuries while he was cutting the bars. "When he clipped loose the steel, it popped him in his face," said Mr. Meldrum. Mr. Norris remained overnight at Alta View Hospital for observation.

At least six paramedics and rescuers reached the victim at the bottom of the shaft and secured him to a sling before pulling him out about 3 p.m., said Salt Lake County sheriff's Deputy Paul Burnett.

Mr. Whitney said there are at least four or five other mine shafts in the area, and not all of them are sealed or covered to prevent entry.

"There's another one that's not barred shut just west of this one," said Mr. Whitney.

"We had no idea there were any [mine shaft openings] up there,"



Steve Griffin/The Salt Lake Tribune

Crews carry Adam Smolenski to a helicopter after rescuing him from a mine shaft where he was stranded for seven hours.

said Mr. Meldrum.

The Sandy Fire Department probably will survey the area to locate the rest of the openings. "Absolutely, we will do something about it," he said.

Sandy police and the Draper

fire department also assisted in the rescue. A command post was set up on Wasatch Boulevard near 11000 South, and a section of the street was closed to clear a landing zone for the helicopter ambulance.

## 1991 Adam Smolensky rescued from abandoned mine shaft

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