

MOUNT HOOD, Oregon (CNN) -- All three climbers and a dog stranded on Mount Hood since Sunday are now off the mountain, said Russell Gubele, command officer for Mountain Wave Search and Rescue.

Lt. Nick Watt with the Clackamas County Sheriff's Department said the rescue was successful because the climbers were well equipped.

"Everything they did was right," said Watt. "In fact everything the climbers did in this occasion was right which makes the big difference between ... a successful rescue and a recovery."

The two women and a man, who suffered only minor injuries, were brought down under their own power, accompanied by three rescue teams, to a point where they could be picked up by a snow cat -- a truck-sized vehicle on tracks instead of wheels, Gubele said.

The snow cat ferried them further down the mountain to a waiting ambulance, which brought them to a state camp site. The climbers used a mountain locator unit which helped rescue teams find them.

The three huddled in their sleeping bags with a Labrador retriever to keep warm as they awaited rescue, according to a spokesman for the climbers.

The dog, named Velvet, is doing better than the humans, climber Trevor Liston said at a news conference Monday evening.

Liston said weather was definitely a factor in the accident. He and the four other climbers who made it back safely, breathed a sigh of relief when they heard their friends were okay.

Liston said the group had initially planned to summit Mount Hood on Sunday, but realized Saturday night "that the weather was coming in and we weren't going anywhere."

After "hunkering down" for the night, the eight climbers started down the mountain, he said. Later, he watched in horror as the three climbers, who had been tethered together along with Velvet, dropped out of sight.

Liston described the moment when his three companions fell, saying the remaining group were "scared for our friends. We couldn't see anything or hear anything."

The accident occurred Sunday in white-out conditions at an altitude of more than 7,300 feet in the area of Illumination Saddle, according to the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office.

The current rescue began Sunday, when five other climbers in the group called for help when their friends fell over the ledge. The five were located and taken down the mountain Sunday night, rescue officials said.)

3 climbers died on Mount Hood in December

This is the second major rescue operation on Mount Hood in recent months.

After a long search in December, rescuers gave up efforts to save a party of three climbers who went missing on the mountain. Only one of those climbers was found -- in the snow cave where he had sought shelter and died.

A group of Oregon lawmakers has proposed a bill that would require climbers going above 10,000 feet on Mount Hood to be equipped with electronic locator units, The Associated Press reported. ([Full story](#))

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