

The Role of Intuition in the Decision Process of Ski Guides

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The criteria individuals use and much of the decision making related knowledge base in professional, mountain guiding has remained poorly understood even to active practicing professionals. Many mountain guides might have difficulty in expressing exactly how field-based risk management decisions are made in particular, how intuition is used. The increased interest in decision-making is not unique to mountain guiding and the avalanche industry. There is much to be learned from how other fields have approached the challenge of understanding the complexities of the decision making process. Research that helps to describe the innovative practices and extant knowledge of mountain guiding will help theory and practice to be more in harmony. With an annual average fatality rate over the last ten years of just under two and a half fatalities per 100,000 skier days in the Canadian mechanized ski industry, it is not unreasonable to suggest that there is considerable knowledge entrenched within the daily activities of the practitioners (BC Coroner, 2003; Israelson, 2008). However it is arguable that even this number of fatalities is too many and all efforts should be made to reduce the number of fatalities in guided groups .