



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DATE: *Saturday, November 9, 2013*
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USAR TEAM FINDS MISSING MAN IN DESERT

Date/Time: Friday, November 8, 2013 5:26 PM
Location: Unnamed Mine near Galway Dry Lake, Johnson Valley, CA
Incident: Missing Person/Technical Rescue

Just before 5:30 PM Friday evening, San Bernardino County Fire responded to a report of a person missing in a mine near Galway Dry Lake in the area of Johnson Valley. Resources arrived in the area and met with a group who stated that they had been exploring a mine when one of their friends disappeared around 3:30 PM. The friends' attempts to locate the man had proved fruitless for the past two hours.

Further questioning determined that the male in his late 20's was last heard travelling and yelling in a horizontal drift one level above the rest of the group when they heard a loud tumbling of rocks. That was the last they heard from him.

Members of County Fire's Urban Search & Rescue Team deployed to the location along with additional firefighters and multiple resources from San Bernardino County Sheriff's Office. While air assets scanned the desert from above, USAR personnel made entry into the mine. After an exhaustive search, it was determined that no one aside from rescuers were below ground.

While returning from the mine back to Highway 247, an off-road trek of approximately 18 miles, County Fire personnel noticed a single white light flashing in the pitch blackness that was not near any of the campsites out on the lake beds. Driving back toward the light, rescuers quickly came upon an individual dressed in pants and a t-shirt who identified himself as the subject of the original search. Aside from mild hypothermia, he was uninjured. He stated that this was his first time in the area and had no idea where he was or what to do.

The man stated he had exited the mine through a ventilation shaft and become lost trying to find his way back to the ATV's. The next seven hours had been spent sleeping and walking through the desert.

San Bernardino County Fire wants to stress the dangers of travelling through abandoned mines. Collapse, unseen shafts, and disorientation are a short list of the numerous hazards in this endeavor. Also, just as we learned as children, the buddy system is always a smart approach when enjoying our outdoor areas.

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