

Let's learn from close call cases in the mountains. Autumn campaign for safe mountaineering to prevent mountain accidents!

With so many natural attractions such as cloudless clear sky, mountains ablaze with autumn leaves, and comfortable climate for mountain hiking, autumn is the season for natural parks to see increase in hikers and climbers. But also it is unfortunate reality that mountain accidents increase in every autumn. The Tokyo Park Rangers always hope a lot of visitors to enjoy pleasant mountains "safely!" In this issue, we collected close call cases that our relevant people experienced. Please make your mountaineering safe by taking a look at those failures and less than failures!

Took a wrong route on the ridge where they should have turned at the right angle

This is the case where the party went straight ahead by mistake where they should have turned at the right angle on the ridge. A signpost was placed at the crossroad, but they seem to have missed it. Make sure to check the map and not to lose your actual location.



Lost in the field of pampas grass



Low visibility due to fog



Decreased body temperature due to rainfall



As a result of late departure, it got pitch dark during the descent



Lost on the ridge covered with fallen leaves



In the Okutama mountains, mountain passes get indistinctive by accumulated fallen leaves. As we had feared, we took a wrong route at a confusing crossroad on the ridge when descending a ridgeway. "Hum. We are supposed to see the forest road on the opposite ridge on the right side view ahead of our course at all times, but why don't I see it?" We checked the map closely and decided to go back. We found the right route after that.

Twisted ankle while making a descent!



*Image

When walking down a familiar mountain path looking around the area, a ranger twisted his left ankle and suffered inversion sprain by underestimating the height of a step. Even though he went down a forest road with lower steps after applying taping, the pain was intolerable. We learned the hard way that it is important to concentrate on my steps especially when descending even if it is a familiar passes.

Took a wrong route while absorbed in talking



*Image

On a familiar mountain path that we have walked so many times. We were very close to completing our descent of the mountain and got absorbed in talking. And next thing we know, we missed the signpost showing descending point and wandered into a strip road. The road got more and more indistinctive, and we thought "Oh, we chose a wrong road, didn't we?" When we realized our mistake, we could go back the way we came calmly and made a safe descent. We always need to be alert and careful.

Fooled by tampered signpost



Tampering



A park ranger
scrubbing off tampering

In 2015, signposts and nearby trees on Minami Takao mountain ridge suffered frequent malicious tampering using knives and magic markers which mislead hikers to destination impossible to reach. If you follow the sign, you will end up in bush and stuck there. In that year, there were several missing incidents caused by those tampering. Such tampering reappeared even after erasing them, so eventually cautions and warnings against sign tampering behavior were issued and it has settled down currently. Do not fooled by such signs, make sure to keep a map with you and hike the mountains with checking it.