

Frostbitten trio rescued in High Peaks

NORTH ELBA - Three Canadian hikers are recovering from frostbite after whiteout conditions forced them to spend a frigid night on top of New York's second-highest mountain.

Francis Sevigny, 31; Christian Fortier, 40; and Sylvio Chan, 32, all from Quebec, were descending the mountain Monday afternoon when they became disoriented in whiteout conditions, state Department of Environmental Conservation spokesman David Winchell said.

They spent the night on the summit of Algonquin Mountain as temperatures dipped to minus 10 - or 65 degrees below zero with the wind chill.

The hikers, who weren't equipped to spend the night in the Adirondack High Peaks, used a cellphone to call for help. A search was launched Monday night, but forest rangers had to give up because of the below-zero temperatures and 30 mph winds.

A state police helicopter spotted the hikers Tuesday morning and eventually lifted them off the summit of the mountain, just south of Lake Placid.

The three men were transported to Adirondack Medical Center, where they were treated for frostbite.

The hikers didn't have a compass or a map and were only equipped for a day hike.

Winchell said winter hikers should always check weather reports, bring maps and compasses, wear appropriate clothing and carry a pack containing extra food, clothing, flashlights and batteries, space blankets, a camping stove with extra fuel and a first-aid kit.

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“Awww, it could never happen to ME”