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**Alaska National Guard**  
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By David Bedard

*176th Wing Public Affairs*

## **Alaska Air National Guard Airmen rescue 2 hikers near Cooper Landing**

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — Alaska Air National Guardsmen of the 176th Wing rescued two distressed hikers Nov. 29 near Cooper Landing about 60 miles south of Anchorage.

Alaska Air National Guard Capt. Joshua Lester, an Alaska Rescue Coordination Center controller and a pilot in the 210th Rescue Squadron, said the hikers used a satellite communication device to contact the Alaska State Troopers who then contacted the AKRCC.

The AKRCC requested assistance from the 176th Wing who dispatched a 210th Rescue Squadron HH-60G Pave Hawk search and rescue helicopter and 212th Rescue Squadron Guardian Angel (GA) team comprising a combat rescue officer and a rescuer. GA teams are highly trained SAR specialists with arctic expertise.

Due to high trees and chest-deep snow, the Pave Hawk crew deployed the GAs using a rescue hoist and lowered them to an area about 100 yards away from the hikers. The team moved to the hikers and assessed them before hoisting them into the Pave Hawk.

The hikers were transported to Providence Alaska Medical Center in Anchorage and released.

Lester commended the hikers for carrying a satellite communication device and said hunters and hikers should always be prepared for bad weather and challenging terrain.

“Cell phone coverage is spotty at best in Alaska’s rural areas, so it’s critical to be able to reach help with a satellite device,” he said. “Also, it’s important to go in parties of at least two as these hikers did to ensure someone can get help if the other is incapacitated.”

For this rescue, 210th RQS, 212th RQS and AKRCC were awarded two saves.

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