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What is AirFlare?

AirFlare is a set of tools that helps Search Teams quickly determine the exact location of an outdoor adventurer in need of assistance via their cell phone, in and out of cell service. AirFlare has tools to help find people with or without the AirFlare app on their phone, but the technology is a lot more powerful when they do. The AirFlare app also has a set of self-help features that make it easier to request assistance, as well as a location sharing feature that helps adventure partners stay connected, potentially reducing the number of assistance requests initiated to Search Teams.

How does AirFlare work?

An outdoor adventurer downloads the AirFlare app to their IOS or Android mobile phone and fills out a short profile which is stored in a Registry. That's it, once downloaded, the AirFlare app does not need to remain open. There is no user action necessary to be discoverable by a search team looking for you, or by a previously authorized contact who has initiated a request for your location. Following are scenarios in which AirFlare Search Technology is used:

Rescue self-initiation:

1. With a single push of a button, an AirFlare subscriber can pull their phone's GPS coordinates into a message that can be sent to an emergency contact, to 911, or can be read over the phone. Text messages can often be sent in poor cell service environments where phone calls will not connect.
2. If an adventurer calls in a rescue, but cannot describe their location, a search team can send a text message to the caller whether or not they have AirFlare on their phone. Upon receipt, the caller "accepts" the message, and GPS coordinates are automatically pulled into a reply message that are sent back to the search team.
3. AirFlare provides location specific emergency contact information, for example, the number to ski patrol at the resort you are currently at, or whether the county you are currently in has Text-to-911 capability.
4. AirFlare enables use of the phone's camera flash as a power-conscious SOS strobe.

Lost / Missing Adventurer:

1. When a search is initiated for an AirFlare subscriber, a notification is automatically sent to the subject's phone. If the phone is within cell service, it will automatically push its coordinates back to the search team in 20 seconds, unless the subject intervenes and declines.
2. If the subject phone is out of cell service or in airplane mode, an AirFlare Detector is configured by the search team to search specifically for the subject's phone. Carried in a jacket pocket or flown in the air via drone or helicopter, the Detector sees through trees and other terrain barriers. When the Detector comes within range of the subject's phone (typically within ½ mile), it alerts the searcher the subject is in the vicinity, and instructs the phone to push it's GPS coordinates back to the searcher.
   A Detector can also be configured to search for a non-AirFlare subscriber, but with a reduced probability of detection.
3. Returned GPS coordinates can be viewed by search teams from a desktop or mobile device in GIS applications such as Google Earth, mobile GPS applications such as Gaia or Avenza, or native IOS Maps or Google Maps applications.

False Alarms:

Searches often end as false alarms. It's just the nature of the business. When a search is initiated for an AirFlare subscriber, a notification is sent to the subject's phone. If the phone is in cell service, it will push its coordinates back to the search team*, regardless where in the world the subject is located. If the subject phone is out of cell service, the notification is queued, and coordinates are returned when the phone comes back into cell service.

** The subject is provided 20 seconds to decline sending coordinates. If declined, the search team is notified of the action.*

Location Sharing with Friends and Family:

Two or more AirFlare subscribers can pre-authorize the ability to locate each other within cell service with a push of a button from the AirFlare app, and view the returned location on a map. This feature helps friends and loved ones keep track of each other on outings and adventures, and is a powerful tool for time-sensitive scenarios like snow suffocations where a partner might be the closest person to locate and assist.