



CONTACTS:

Denis Lee, AirFlare co-founder, (805)-794-2993, denis@airflare.com

Eliot Gillum, Airflare founder, (650)-796-0669, eliot@airflare.com

Tony Harrison, publicist, (208)-880-9814, tony@composition.biz

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AirFlare's new Subject Chat transforms ski patrol interventions

New technology reduces resort costs, boosts patrol operations efficiency, makes life easier for patrollers and guests alike

SAN FRANCISCO (March 15, 2024) — AirFlare, an innovative outdoors safety system that leverages the ubiquity of smartphones, has introduced Subject Chat to its platform, providing rescuers with a powerful new communications channel to accelerate responses to guests in distress.

The core functionality of AirFlare's smartphone app makes a phone quickly locatable by rescuers in strong, spotty, or zero-connectivity environments. Now patrol teams using AirFlare can leverage the new Subject Chat feature to communicate with guests when vocal conversations aren't optimal or viable, providing a crucial lifeline in emergency situations or simply improving the speed and quality of everyday interactions. Subject Chat also lets you send pictures, allowing guests to visually communicate their location or injuries, facilitating a faster, more accurate patrol response.

"Subject Chat demonstrates AirFlare's commitment to relentless innovation on the core toolset used by rescuers," AirFlare co-founder Denis Lee said. "It unlocks a whole new way to communicate with guests. It works well when voice calls don't, like when it's too windy, the signal's not strong enough, or one party is distracted or busy. It gets peoples' attention in a way phone calls and voicemail don't.

"It enables new scenarios, like providing written instructions or information that a guest may need to refer to. Perhaps best of all, rescuers can remotely guide people to safety, seeing them on the map and using Subject Chat to check in with them. And guests can report back via Subject Chat when they've made it back, or send a picture showing an obstacle or problem that they need help with."

Some recent usage examples include:

- **Feb. 18 at Keystone**

Patrol: This is Ski Patrol. Please let us know if you still need assistance.

Guest: I made it

Patrol: Thank you! Glad you made it down safe.

- **Feb 4 at Bogus Basin after a false iPhone Crash Detection prompted a call from a guest's mother**

Guest: I am ok, completely unintended call thank you

Patrol: Thank you. Your mom called and I understand you called her as well. Thank you for responding

Guest: Thanks for being so great at your job, iPhone being silly in my pocket.

- **Feb. 3 at Stevens Pass**

Patrol: Your grandson is with Patrol and looking for you. Please respond to this location request or call (253) xxx-xxxx

- **Feb. 14 at Solitude**

Patrol: Are you hurt?

Guest: Not yet but I'm working on it

Patrol team testimonials confirm AirFlare's impact

Angie Nylund, senior ski patroller and training coordinator at Schweitzer, Idaho's largest ski area, sums up the app's essential benefit: "AirFlare has proven to be an indispensable asset for Schweitzer, significantly improving our operations. We utilize it not only to locate lost individuals in the backcountry but also to pinpoint injured skiers within our ski area boundary. Thanks to AirFlare, our search times have seen a remarkable reduction, allowing us to offer our guests a superior experience."

Her remarks are consistent with feedback from other patrol operations about AirFlare's utility, precision, and ease of use.

- "Using AirFlare we decrease response times by not going to the wrong location or taking a long time searching several trails or glades to find the caller." — Andrew Belcher, patrol director, Magic Mountain Ski Area, Vermont
- "AirFlare has ready-in-your-pocket convenience and gives us a rapid response capability for both in-bounds and out-of-bounds areas. It promises to be a valuable tool for our team as we add terrain and services in the coming years." — John Huffstutter, patrol director, 49° North Mountain Resort, Washington
- "The AirFlare app has probably kept us from going home after dark a number of times. It's just a lot easier when someone calls in at three o'clock saying that they need help. The ability to just track them down instead of looking for a needle in a haystack has

probably kept us from staying the night up here more than once.” — Michelle Mulder, assistant patrol director, Powder Mountain, Utah

- “We have used AirFlare for three seasons and love the platform. The real-time training and support has been excellent. We have used AirFlare to pinpoint the location of guests, both in and out of bounds. We have used Airflare in two ways specifically to assist guests. One is to get our staff to the guest's location and the other is communicate with a mobile guest how they should proceed to make it back to the area or a pickup point. The latter method allows us to monitor the progress and keep staff at their posts until direct contact and pickup is appropriate. We are grateful for this wonderful tool.” — John Batchelder, patrol director, Lookout Pass Ski & Recreation Area, Idaho
- “AirFlare continues to help us in our day-to-day patrol operations by providing us a way to get GPS locations directly from guests.” — Dave Marchand, patrol director, Jay Peak Resort, Vermont

AirFlare’s commitment to mountain safety

Eliot Gillum, the inventor, founder, and CEO of AirFlare, expects the new Subject Chat feature will help ski areas further harness the power of the smartphone to make life easier and safer for both guests and patrollers.

“Subject Chat will provide an additional tool for patrol teams to respond to guests in need,” he said. “It’s not just about faster response times; it’s about being able to provide the *right* help.”

Gillum said that from locating lost skiers and quickly addressing injuries and other medical issues to streamlining patrol responses, AirFlare has proven to be an indispensable tool in enhancing guest safety and patroller work environments.

“AirFlare can improve your efficiency in responding to calls for assistance, help mitigate risk for patrollers in the field, and reduce operating costs,” he said. “Plus, modernizing patrol operations via solutions like AirFlare can also boost the perception of the professionalism of your staff among guests, as well as provide tangible quality-of-work improvements for patrollers.”

Unanimous agreement: AirFlare substantially reduces costs and improves response time

A survey of ski area mountain and patrol leadership currently using the AirFlare platform underscores how AirFlare has transformed the way ski areas respond to guests needing assistance:

- **Location data efficiency** — 100 percent believe AirFlare's accuracy in location data has substantially reduced the time and resources needed for search operations.

- **Professional image** — 67 percent of respondents perceive AirFlare as instrumental in elevating their ski patrol operations' professionalism and sophistication.
- **Operational efficiency** — 84 percent affirm that using AirFlare bolsters operational efficiency when assisting guests.
- **Risk reduction** — 84 percent confirm that incorporating AirFlare into operations reduces risk, underscoring its value in enhancing safety protocols.

“The survey further highlights AirFlare as an indispensable toolset for rescuers, streamlining their ability to quickly locate and assist those in need,” Lee said. “As ski areas continue to adopt AirFlare, the promise of safer, more enjoyable skiing experiences becomes a reality.”

Visit <https://airflare.com/mountainresorts> for more information about how AirFlare — now featuring Subject Chat — can revolutionize patrol operations.

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