



Town of Falmouth
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NEWS RELEASE - 2020-09

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Falmouth Fire-EMS Responds to Lost Hiker in Woods

On Tuesday afternoon at 3:56 p.m. the Falmouth Fire-EMS Department was called to a report of a hiker lost in the North Falmouth Community Forest off Blackstrap Road in West Falmouth. The hiker was on a trail but lost and not able to find his way back to his car at the trail head on Blackstrap Road. The Falmouth Fire-EMS Department responded with Engine 4, Utility 4 with the UTV (Utility 5), the Chief, and Assistant Chief.

Once on scene, crews unloaded the UTV from the trailer while a team from Engine 4 walked into the woods from the entrance to the trails near the hiker's car off Blackstrap Road. The hiker was reported to be on the red trail, which was approximately 1 mile into the woods from the entrance. The UTV was then sent into the trails but could not get far due to the width of the trails. A mountain biker arrived at the trail head and offered assistance. He knew the trail system well and he knew how to get to the red trail. He also had a light on his bike. He headed in with the instructions to locate the hiker, stay with him until we could safely walk him out, and let us know the hiker's condition via cell phone.

A dispatcher at Falmouth Public Safety was able to obtain the GPS location of the hiker and relayed the latitude and longitude coordinates to the fire department command post. Given the location, Utility 4 and crew were moved to Summit Terrace off Grist Mill Road. The team that had started on foot from Blackstrap Road came out and staged at the trail head by the hiker's car in case he was able to walk out on his own. The command post was moved to Summit Terrace where, using the GPS coordinates, three firefighters walked into the dense woods toward the lost hiker. The firefighters were tracked on I Am Responding, a software program the department has been using for the past few years to track responding firefighters to emergency calls. It was dark by the time the firefighters entered the woods, but using the firefighters' location on I Am Responding, and the coordinates of the lost hiker obtained through the dispatcher, Assistant Chief Hallett at the fire department command post was able to guide his crews to the location of the hiker in less than 15 minutes. By that time the mountain biker had also made his way to the hiker and called the command post via cell phone to let us know the hiker was ok. Once crews met up, the firefighters on foot were able to walk the hiker directly out of the woods to Summit Terrace using flashlights.

The lost hiker was found in almost the exact location on the same part of the trail as a lost hiker found in October 2019. The call in 2019 was the first time the department had used the I Am Responding software system to guide crews to a missing party. While that rescue took over 1.5 hours, this time the department was able to have the hiker out of the woods in under 1 hour from the time of the initial emergency call yesterday.

The Falmouth Police Department assisted the Falmouth Fire-EMS crews on scene. Once out of the woods the hiker was driven back to his vehicle.

End of release.

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