



Administrators of spring backpacking and mountaineering programs must review each course itinerary with an eye towards river/stream crossings and high water. Routes should be chosen to minimize all potential crossings and alternate routes should be available that do not require any crossings. Staff should be trained in crossings, basic river rescue, and all protocols reviewed prior to the start of the trip.

The instructors were itinerary driven to attempt the stream crossing or miss their end-of-course pick-up and neglected to consider the individual size and abilities of their students. In truth, they would have benefitted by waiting until the water went down. Had they missed their pick-up time, the organization would have initiated a search. While a delay of one or more days would likely have created some food stress, no one's life would be placed at risk. In most spring settings, water levels tend to drop throughout the night as snow melt decreases leaving early mornings a safer time to cross swollen streams.

