

Woman sues following collision with Heavenly employee

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SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, Calif. — A Florida woman filed suit against Vail Resorts, Heavenly Valley and a Heavenly Mountain Resort employee this week after being injured during a ski collision with the employee at the resort in January.

About 3:50 p.m. on Jan. 18 Kimberly Bland was standing above the Stagecoach base area deciding where to ski next when she was struck by lift operator Daniel Barreno, according to a suit filed in federal court Wednesday.

The suit contends Barreno was snowboarding “negligently and recklessly” near the bottom of the resort’s Olympic run when he hit her, causing head, neck, shoulder and back injuries.

“Because he was in the course and scope of his employment at the time his negligence occurred, his employer, Heavenly, is vicariously liable, through the doctrine of respondeat superior, for Mr. Barreno’s negligence,” according to the suit. “In effect, Heavenly itself crashed into Kimberly.”

Heavenly spokesman Russ Pecoraro declined to comment on the suit. He also did not say whether Barreno is still employed by the ski resort.

“It’s our long-standing policy to not comment on pending litigation,” Pecoraro said in an email.

Bland was knocked unconscious due to the collision and was taken to Barton Memorial Hospital where she was diagnosed with a concussion, according to the suit.

CT scans showed she also suffered bulging discs in her back as a result of the collision and was later found to have a rotator cuff injury that required several weeks of physical therapy.

Bland has also suffered emotional distress and depression from her injuries and has become worried about her ability to keep her paramedic job and obtain future employment as a firefighter, according to the suit.

She is seeking damages in excess of \$350,000, as well as legal fees.

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