



# The 1999 Saxetenbach Disaster



# Contents

- A brief history of Saxetenbach Gorge
- The 1990 Swiss Cheese Model
- The Saxetenbach disaster
- What was the result of this disaster
- What have I learnt

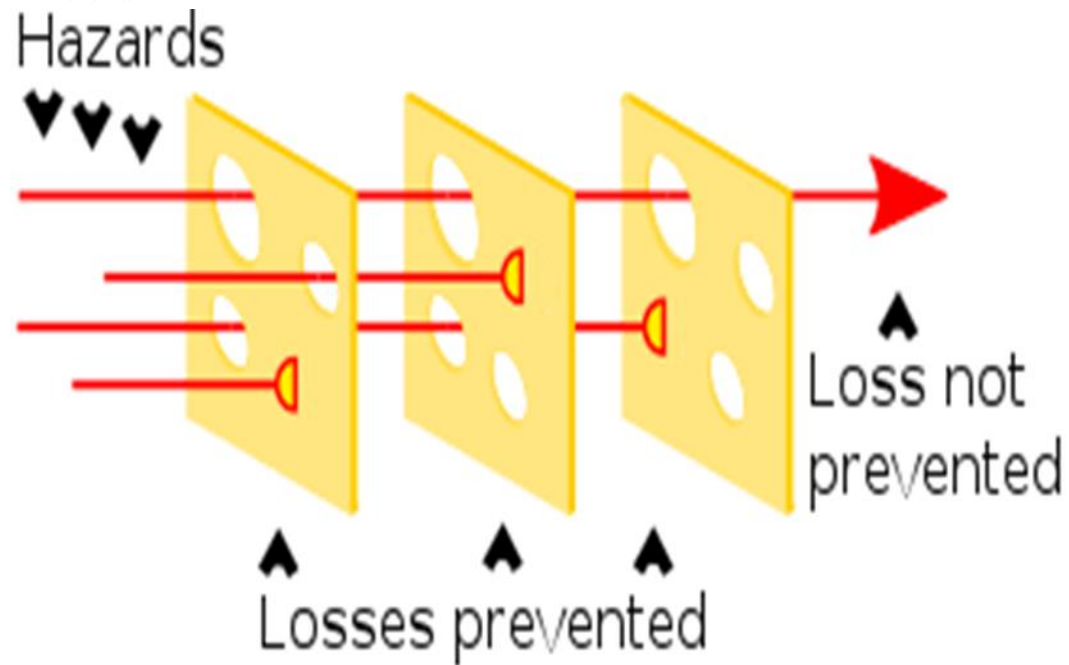


# A brief history of Saxetenbach Gorge

- The Saxetenbach is a mountain river south of Interlaken in the Canton of Bern, Switzerland.
- Some of the activities that this gorge can provide includes:  
bungee jumping, canyoning and whitewater rafting.
- Canyoning is the most common activity for this gorge and a canyoning trip on average takes 1-4 hours.



# The 1990 Swiss Cheese Model



- Reason's 1990 Swiss cheese model
- This model is one of the main models to be able to see errors and incidents that has happened in a disaster



# The Saxetenbach disaster

- Date – 27<sup>th</sup> of July 1999
- There were 45 members of the public and 8 guides and instructors and they were split into 4 groups of 10 -12
- Each member of the group payed \$60 for a 90 minute session
- Each member had appropriate kit given to them
- A storm was coming over the mountains which would later cause a flash flood
- 21 people aged 18-31 died in the flood



# What was the result of this disaster ?

- “The key criteria that changed after Saxeten: it was said that we needed a certification or training, but there was no common standard,” said Katrin Blumberg, president of the Swiss Outdoor Association.
- “After the canyoning tragedy, the company that led the ill-fated trip said it wanted to develop a high-water alert system to make its trips safer. ” (Giroud, 2019)



# What have I learnt ?

- Weather can have an unimaginable impact on an activity
- That pressure from companies to do an activity is not right and that I should be able to make my own decisions
- Make sure that I have plenty of experience of where I am and that I know all the escape routes and am familiar with the area



# References

- Bell, S, Bale, J (1999). 'Probe on canyon horror' (Available at: <https://www.independent.ie/world-news/probe-on-canyon-horror-26145675.html>) (Accessed 08.01.2021)
- Experience Interlaken (2021). 'Easy Saxeten Canyon' (Available at: <https://www.myswitzerland.com/en-gb/experiences/easy-saxeten-canyon/>) (Accessed 12.01.2021)
- Head, M (1999). 'profit drive blamed for swiss canyon tragedy' (Available at: <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/1999/08/swss-a06.html>) (Accessed 14.01.2021)
- Lashmar, L, Imre, K (1999). 'Swiss river disaster: Black wall of water swept down the gorge, crushing everyone in its path' (Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/swiss-river-disaster-black-wall-of-water-swept-down-the-gorge-crushing-everyone-in-its-path-1109256.html>) (Accessed 08.01.2021)
- Leland, J (1999). 'A wall of black water' (Available at: <https://www.newsweek.com/wall-black-water-165758>) (Accessed 09.01.2021)