



AAC Publications

Falling Rock

Alberta, Banff National Park, Division Peak

As a part of a climbing camp set up in Icefall Brook, a party of six was traversing Division Peak near the Lyell Icefields on August 5. While descending the final peak, a member of the party was hit by rockfall on the arm and sustained a compound fracture. One member of the party continued back to camp to call for rescue by satellite phone, while the four others stayed with the injured climber and activated their SPOT device.

Parks Canada was notified of the incident at approximately 3 p.m. The Visitor Safety team was already engaged in two other search and rescue operations, so a member of Kananaskis Public Safety was requested to join the Parks Canada rescue leader. The Kananaskis Public Safety member rendezvoused with Parks Canada at Castle Junction by helicopter, and the team then continued to Lake Louise to pick up gear. From Lake Louise they were en route to the Lyell Icefields.

The climbing team was quickly located, and the rescue leader formulated a plan. The Parks Canada rescuer slung into the site and relayed back to the other rescuer the equipment needed to accomplish the rescue. The other team member then slung into the site. The patient was packaged quickly and was slung out to the staging area with the Kananaskis Public Safety member. The four other climbers were subsequently sent out via sling to the staging area, followed by the rescue leader, who came last. The uninjured climbers were flown back to their camp because it was very late in the day. The injured climber was flown back to Lake Louise to meet Banff EMS with the rescue team.

Analysis

Rockfall is common in the Canadian Rockies. Therefore, careful positioning of climbers and routefinding is required. The experience level of the group is unknown. However, it appeared that they dealt with the situation appropriately. They administered first aid and placed a call for help via two different methods to ensure that a rescue was launched.

Images

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