



## AAC Publications

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### **Fall on Rock – Inadequate Belay, Inexperience**

Virginia, Richmond, Manchester Wall

**On Sunday, November 30, I (Jake Jones) watched as a climber fell approximately 40 feet to the ground while leading.** At the time I had just been lowered to the ground after climbing a different route. I happened to look to my right and saw a male climber falling, hit the ground feet-first, and end up in a sitting position.

Luckily, several trained first responders were climbing there that day, along with a nurse. Amazingly, the climber did not seem to have obvious injuries, but he was in tremendous pain. After 911 was called, emergency medical services arrived in under 10 minutes.

#### **ANALYSIS**

A number of factors contributed to this incident. The climber appeared to be experienced, but his partner, belaying with an ATC, was new to belaying a leader. The belayer did not brake properly, got her hands burned by the rope, and let go. The leader knew the belayer was inexperienced and chose to hop on lead anyway. Also, she was anchored to the ground with a piece of cord clipped to her harness haul loop. Haul loops are for hauling a second rope on long climbs, not for attaching to anchors. (Source: Jake Jones.)

[Editor's note: Manchester Wall is located by the James River, near downtown Richmond, and consists of three 60-foot granite pillars of an abandoned Richmond and Petersburg Railroad bridge.]

**Images**

Article Details

Author	Jake Jones
Publication	ANAM
Volume	10
Issue	68
Page	0
Copyright Date	2015
Article Type	Accident reports