



## AAC Publications

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### **Hypothermia and Exposure – Climbing Alone**

Alaska, Denali, West Buttress

**On May 5, Javier Callupan, a 39-year-old male from Argentina, was observed moving from the 11,200-foot camp to the 14,200-foot camp on the West Buttress.** On May 6 he moved from the 14,200-foot camp to high camp at 17,200 feet. All other parties attempting to move to high camp on this day turned around due to inclement weather.

On May 10, at 11:30 p.m., a call to the Talkeetna Ranger Station reported that members of a U.S. Coast Guard team had found a deceased individual next to the Park Service rescue cache at the 17,200-foot camp. This individual was later identified as Callupan. He was found lying on the surface of the snow with the fly of his tent partially draped around him.

The climber's body was recovered from 17,200 feet on May 29. The medical examiner's report indicated that Callupan died from hypothermia and exposure to the environment. [Denali National Park Case Incident Record.]

#### **ANALYSIS**

The climber moved up the mountain quicker than recommended—less than six days from base camp to high camp, including ascending from 11,200 feet to 17,200 feet in just two days. Moreover, the weather during this period was poor, with high winds, cold, and snow. It was likely a combination of exhaustion, altitude sickness, and difficult weather conditions that caused him to fail to set up his tent, leaving him susceptible to hypothermia. Early season attempts on the West Buttress Route require exceptional self-sufficiency, because few climbers will be on the route and ranger patrols generally do not reach the upper mountain until mid-May. (Source: The Editors.)

## Images

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