



## AAC Publications

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### **Fall on Rock – Inadequate Tie-In Knot, No Helmet**

Wisconsin, Devil's Lake State Park, Rainy Wednesday Tower

**A father and his 9-year-old daughter were climbing at Rainy Wednesday Tower on September 19. The father had over 30 years of climbing experience, and the daughter had climbed indoors but did not have much outdoor experience.** The father was standing on a ledge about 10 to 15 feet up the 50-foot face, and was either belaying the girl as she climbed or lowering her. The father said he had checked his daughter's gear and it appeared OK, but at some point she fell 10 to 20 feet to the bottom of the face and sustained multiple skull fractures.

Nearby climbers responded and provided first aid, maintaining her neck and spine position and keeping her airway clear. When the local fire rescue team arrived, they evacuated the patient by carrying her on a backboard up a steep access gully. She was airlifted to the hospital. (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Visitor Accident Report and climber testimony.)

### **ANALYSIS**

The fall was not witnessed and the father was in shock and unable to provide details on what had happened, either at the scene or afterward. It appears that he was belaying from a stance partway up the cliff, perhaps to advise or encourage his daughter as she climbed or lowered. Various parties reported she was wearing a harness with an assortment of carabiners and "other gear" clipped to it, but the end of the climbing rope was not tied to her harness. The father was wearing a harness and his belay device was loaded with a strand of the same rope that was lying across the victim. The anchor at the top of the cliff appeared to be fine. It seems most likely the young climber's tie-in knot was improperly tied or unfinished. The girl was not wearing a helmet. (Source: The Editors.)

**Images**

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