



AAC Publications

Falling Ice – Poor Position

Canada, Alberta, Ghost River Valley

On February 2, a party of two was ascending a four-pitch WI5 ice route called Sorcerer. Low on the route, one of the climbers was struck by falling ice. He was lowered to the ground and a rescue was requested using a SPOT device. A multi-agency rescue ensued. The injured climber was treated for head and neck injuries and then flown out to the Ghost River Ranger Station. The injured climber had sustained a concussion and a sprain (location not specified).

ANALYSIS

Rescue personnel concluded that the evacuated climbers had been in a poor position on the route. Scarcity bias may have been at play—multiple parties had converged on this remote and coveted route that day, after approaching for several hours. The individual reporting the accident speculated that there was not much communication among the parties and that language barriers were possible contributory factors.

Climbing underneath other ice climbers profoundly increases one's exposure to falling ice. If you insist on climbing beneath other climbers, try to climb on the opposite side of the route, relative to the party or parties above. Establish belay stances in protected locations.

Images

Article Details

Author	Robert Chisnall
Publication	ANAM
Volume	11
Issue	69
Page	122
Copyright Date	2016
Article Type	Accident reports