



AAC Publications

Rappel Failure – Miscommunication, No Stopper Knots

Canada, Alberta, Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Park, Cougar Creek Canyon

On April 28, two climbers were descending a single-pitch route known as Aces High on Casino Wall. One of the climbers rappelled off the ends of the rope. He fell about five meters and landed on his back, sustaining a lower back injury described as a fracture, and had to be evacuated.

ANALYSIS

This accident was attributed to inadequate communication and a failure to double check the length of the route relative to the length of the rope. The guidebook notes the climb is 31 meters high, making it very difficult to rappel safely with a single 60-meter rope. Tying stopper knots in the ends of the rope before rappelling could have prevented the climber from hitting the ground.

Images

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