



AAC Publications

Fall on Snow – Inadequate Protection, Failure to Self-Arrest

Oregon, Mt. Hood, South Side Route

On June 9 a party of two experienced climbers (ages 49 and 52) fell high on the South Side Route while descending the “Old Chute.” The roped pair was unable to arrest the fall. One of the climbers suffered facial lacerations and bruised ribs. He was evacuated by a joint team from Portland Mountain Rescue and American Medical Response.

ANALYSIS

A roped team that does not belay or use intermediate running protection between climbers risks a group fall if any of the climbers slips. The decision of whether to rope up on steep snow depends on many factors, including the steepness and condition of the snow, the experience and skill of the climbers, the presence or absence of crevasses, and the presence of terrain traps below the climbers. Climbers must continuously assess the terrain and conditions and adjust as necessary. (Source: Jeff Scheetz, Portland Mountain Rescue, and the Editors.)

Images



Rescuers prepare to evacuate an injured climber after a fall while descending the Old Chute on the south side of Mt. Hood.

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