



## AAC Publications

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### Shawangunks Annual Summary

New York, Mohonk Preserve

**In 2016 at the Mohonk Preserve there were 21 climbing-related incidents, including both injury and illness.** Sixteen accidents required technical rescues. Seven of the accidents were caused by a belay system failure, while four were caused by inadequate protection. Three climbers suffered from heat-related illness.

A climber sustained an unusual injury while on Star Action, a 5.10 in the Trapps. The climber fell while leading and collided with a non-locking carabiner attached to the last gear placement. The carabiner impaled the ankle and subsequently arrested the climber upside down from the heel. The climber removed the pierced carabiner and was lowered to the ground. (Editor's note: A first-person report from this incident can be found [here](#).)

Two climbers sustained multiple systems trauma while attempting to simul-rappel from Madam G's rappel stations. Uneven ropes caused one of these climbers to rappel off the rope, which led both climbers to drop approximately 20 feet to the ground. A stopper knot on both ends of the rappel line would have prevented the immediate cause of this accident. Stopper knots or closing the system might have helped several other climbers avoid traumatic injuries from mistakes while rappelling or belaying in 2016.

A fatal accident occurred in the Near Trapps when a visitor was off-trail and fell over 100 feet to the ground. The cause of the fall is unknown. However, it is thought the visitor was by the cliff edge where soft duff provides poor traction—it's best to stay anchored or on belay until you've moved well back from the edge.

Several injuries were sustained while climbers were less than 10 feet off the ground, an environment where the perceived risk level was low. Confidence in our climbing abilities and in our partners can be the recipe for a great day. Confidence through complacency can also be our worst enemy. (Source: Andrew Bajardi, chief ranger of Mohonk Preserve.)

**LONGER THAN EXPECTED TRAD FALL:** We did not receive a firsthand report, but there is a good account and analysis on Mountain Project of an incident on July 17 in which the leader took a long fall from the third-pitch crux of Shockley's Ceiling, despite protection quite close by, and suffered several fractures and a collapsed lung. The belayer, who weighed much less than the climber, "whipped violently up into the rock" while catching the fall and also sustained minor injuries. Other factors lengthening the fall may have included the leader adding extensions to the pieces he placed, slack in the belay, and rope stretch. (Belaying closer to the crux might be considered, in order to minimize stretch.) The incident is a reminder that many factors can add up to a much longer than expected fall.

**Images**

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