



## AAC Publications

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### **Fatal Slip on Ice – Inadequate Equipment**

Canada, British Columbia, Glacier National Park, Mt. Sir Donald

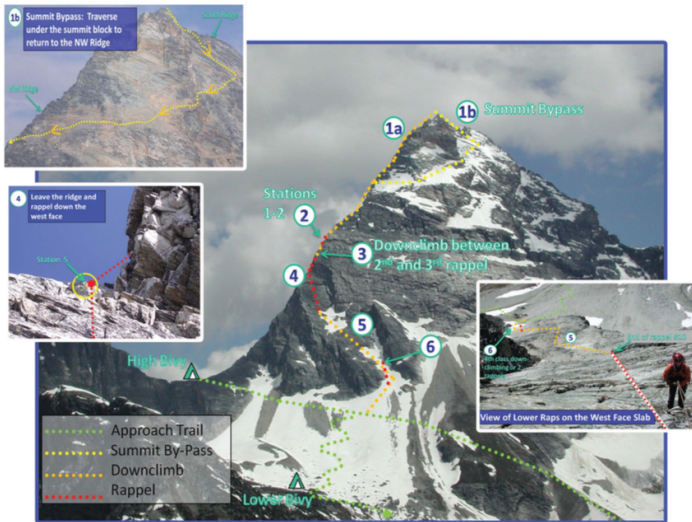
**On July 15, TP and AM climbed the classic northwest ridge of Mt. Sir Donald.** On the summit they met another pair of climbers and decided to descend together via the West Face Bypass route. As the group made their way down, they had to cross a few snow patches. Around 10:15 a.m., TP started to cross a snow patch, slipped, quickly lost control, and tumbled down the face out of view. AM activated a SPOT emergency communication device, and one of the other team members called 911.

A helicopter reconnaissance located the deceased climber, who had fallen about 240 meters. The three party members remaining above were evacuated from an elevation of 3,150 meters using a long-line, and the body was recovered the next morning.

### **ANALYSIS**

The climber slipped and fell while crossing what had appeared to be a small snow patch—in fact it was just a few centimeters of soft snow over ice. He was wearing climbing approach shoes and did not have crampons or an ice axe. When snow patches are still visible on the West Face Bypass, it is advisable to carry an ice axe, crampons, and mountain boots for this descent to avoid potential falls. Alternatively, downclimbing and rappelling the northwest ridge would avoid having to deal with snow and ice on the bypass route.

## Images



Parks Canada has created a detailed free guide to the descent options for Mt. Sir Donald. Search “Sir Donald descent guide” to download a copy.

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