



AAC Publications

Rockfall

British Columbia, Yoho National Park, Mt. Hungabee

On September 3, a four-person team ascended the west ridge of Mt. Hungabee after a high bivouac the previous night. During the descent, one team member was struck on the helmet by a large rock while he was attached to an anchor. The climber had been leaning into the rock, face forward, to gain shelter from rockfall. When the impact occurred, the climber's face was slammed against the rock, resulting in a broken nose. The climbers were able to continue down to their bivouac, where they called for an evacuation.

It was extremely windy and a rescue helicopter failed several times to reach the party. After numerous tries, the rescue helicopter landed in the meadows below, and the climbing party was asked to begin descending on their own. Within 45 minutes the climbing team, with their injured climber, descended from the bivouac, crossed the glacier, and met the rescue team in the moraine below. The patient was evacuated from there.

ANALYSIS

Despite the patient sustaining a significant blow to the head, this party was able to descend under its own power—they could have simply walked out or else called from the meadows below, where helicopter access is much easier. Rescuers put themselves at significant risk to access injured patients. Consider self-evacuation when possible.

Images

Article Details

Author	Parks Canada and Robert Chisnall
Publication	ANAM
Volume	11
Issue	71
Page	117
Copyright Date	2018
Article Type	Accident reports