



## AAC Publications

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### Leader Fall On Rock

Utah, Zion National Park, Moonlight Buttress

**On April 4 at about 4:30 p.m., Zion dispatch received a report of climbers calling for help on the Moonlight Buttress climbing route.** Rangers observed through binoculars that two climbers were at the top of the second pitch, one of whom (male, 60) appeared to have a splint on his ankle but otherwise did not appear to be seriously injured. The uninjured climber rappelled a fixed line to the ground, crossed the Virgin River, and walked to the road to speak with the rangers.

The party of two had been aid climbing the Moonlight Buttress route, planning to spend one night on the wall. The injured climber had fallen about four feet in ledgy terrain near the top of the third pitch, where there is mandatory 5.8 free climbing. He was wearing approach shoes, not climbing shoes.

The partner told rangers the climber's ankle was obviously deformed and angulated but not open. He said the injured climber would rappel but wanted his partner's assistance. Rangers gave him splinting supplies, a radio, and a 400-foot, 11mm rope for the rappel. The partner ascended his fixed line with the supplies and, since it was now getting dark, the pair decided to remain on the ledge until morning. A litter team and medic met the two at the base the next morning and carried the injured climber across the river to the road. (Source: Andrew P. Fitzgerald, Zion National Park.)

### ANALYSIS

While aiding in climbing shoes is generally unattractive, it might be the best choice for a pitch with passages of difficult or awkward free climbing. (Another option is to change shoes mid-pitch.) Transitioning between aid and free climbing—e.g., moving in and out of aiders confidently—is a useful skill to practice before a big wall climb. (Sources: Andrew P. Fitzgerald and the Editors.)

**Images**

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