



## AAC Publications

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### **Falling Tree – Situational Awareness**

Canada, Lake Louise, Back of the Lake

**On June 13, a tree fell from above the Outhouse Wall at the Back of the Lake area and struck three climbers who were at the base.** One climber (male, age 26) was flown to a hospital by air ambulance and later died from his injuries. A second climber was transported to Banff Mineral Springs Hospital with moderate injuries, and a third was able to walk out from the area without assistance.

#### **ANALYSIS**

The cliffs at Back of the Lake line the foot of a steep mountain that extends far above the climbing areas. The tree or part of a tree that hit the climbers is believed to have fallen 80 to 100 meters and may have been toppled by high wind. A reconnaissance flight after the incident suggested there were dozens of dead trees above these popular cliffs.

It was reported that the climber who later died (male, mid-20s) was not wearing a helmet when the tree fell, while the other two climbers were wearing helmets. This is a stark reminder that helmets should be donned as soon as climbers enter an area with significant overhead hazard—don't wait until the rope is flaked out. Considering the known risk at this area, climbers might consider another destination when high wind is forecast. (Source: ACMG report, other published reports, and the Editors.)

**Images**

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