



## AAC Publications

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### **Exhaustion–Inexperience, Inadequate Supplies**

Alaska, Denali, West Buttress

**On May 29, a 64-year-old male climber left high camp on the West Buttress for Denali's summit, climbing solo and carrying no food, water, or shelter.** During his descent, he was rescued by a guided party and NPS personnel after falling repeatedly on the Autobahn slope, which traverses above 17,200-foot camp to Denali Pass. The NPS team assessed and assisted this climber throughout the remainder of the night, before helping the climber to descend to 14,200-foot camp the next day.

#### **ANALYSIS**

This climber was inexperienced and unprepared for the difficulties and hazards of a Denali summit day. In recent years, NPS rangers have witnessed a rise in speed or lightweight summit attempts. Most of these climbers are forgoing valuable supplies in an attempt to move faster. In addition, many seem to be making their decisions to go light to the summit based on the actions of others or due to impending weather, and not based on their own experience or initial planning. When environmental conditions change or a climber's physical state deteriorates on the upper mountain, such climbers are left with little to no margin of safety. Many of these climbers have required assistance or rescue, due to their underestimation of the energy and time required to reach the summit and return safely.

(Source: Denali Mountaineering Rangers.)

## Images

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