



## AAC Publications

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### **Fall on Snow — Failure to Self-Arrest**

Colorado, Indian Peaks Wilderness, Mt. Neva, Juliet Couloir

**At 5:30 a.m. on June 11, a 22-year-old male left the Fourth of July trailhead to attempt the Juliet Couloir, a short, moderate snow route on Mt. Neva (12,814 feet).** As he was nearing the cornice at the top, he fell. He had an ice axe but failed to self-arrest. The climber fell the length of the couloir, hitting some rocks on the way down and sustaining multiple injuries, including a fractured femur. He activated his Garmin inReach just after 8 a.m. and was able to transmit his location and condition to rescuers. He was extracted by helicopter hoist and transferred to a ground ambulance.

### **ANALYSIS**

The ability to self-arrest on steep, soft snow is a prerequisite for spring and summer snow climbs. Repeated practice will improve one's chances of stopping a slide.

The climber's use of a satellite communication device was invaluable in transmitting timely, accurate information, including GPS coordinates of his exact location. This was essential to organizing the right resources for his rescue, which involved the Colorado Hoist Rescue Team; the CHRT is a collaboration between military aviation assets from Buckley Air Force Base and civilian SAR personnel from Rocky Mountain Rescue Group. (Sources: Rocky Mountain Rescue Group and the Editors.)

## Images



The scene after a long fall from the Juliet Couloir, the snow chute in upper left. The climber had nearly reached the cornice at the top before falling.

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