



## AAC Publications

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### **Stranded — Dropped Crampon, Weather and Darkness**

Canada, Alberta, Banff National Park, Mt. Temple

**On August 1, a party of two was ascending the east ridge of Mt. Temple and navigating a section of the route that involved traversing steep ice and snow for several hundred meters before the final vertical step through a rock band called the Black Towers.** While on this section of the route, one of the party members dropped a crampon down the steep southeast face and was unable to retrieve it. The party attempted to descend the east ridge but got caught in a thunderstorm with heavy rainfall soon after they started down.

With diminishing daylight and the route completely wet, the climbers called for help at 10 p.m. Rescue personnel advised the group to find a sheltered place to spend the night. A successful long-line rescue was initiated at dawn the next day.

#### ANALYSIS

The party was able to effectively retreat to terrain that was suitable for an emergency bivy. They also used good judgment to not continue their descent after the thunderstorm. The steep quartzite rock bands on the east ridge get extremely slick and treacherous when wet. As well, the climbing party was carrying an appropriate communication device to initiate a rescue.

Inspect all your equipment to ensure that it is in good working order before every outing. When switching to terrain that will require different equipment, such as moving from vertical rock to snow and ice, it is best to find or make a platform that allows for a comfortable transition. This will reduce the risk of dropping gear and allow for a more effective check to ensure the equipment has been adjusted correctly. (Source: Banff, Yoho & Kootenay National Parks Visitor Safety Team.)

**Images**

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