



## AAC Publications

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### Fall On Rock — Inadequate Belay

Canada, Alberta, Bow Valley, Grassi Lakes

**On August 26, an experienced, 38-year-old, male climber was leading an unknown sport route on Gardener's Wall at Grassi Lakes.** The climber fell about 40 feet to the ground after the belayer lost control of the rope. During the fall, the climber hit a ledge and sustained multiple injuries, including fractures of the 12th thoracic vertebra and pelvis, a dislocated ankle, and an open fracture of the lower leg. He was heli-slung from the scene to emergency medical services. It was reported that he was expected to recover in six months.

#### ANALYSIS

In a newspaper story, the injured climber was quoted as saying, "I had clipped the last bolt and I could see the anchor, but I was getting tired because of the routes we did just before. I was about six feet from the anchor and realized I wouldn't make it. I called to [the belayer] below me to say that I was going to fall, so she could be prepared to help stop the fall. She didn't hear me. I started to free fall, pulling the rope off her hand. She tried to grab the rope with her free hand, but I was heavier and it was more force on her." The story said the belayer suffered third-degree burns on one hand.

This pair had climbed together "often," and it is not known what caused the belayer to lose control of the rope, but a belayer must be prepared to catch a fall at any moment. (Sources: Matt Mueller, public safety specialist, and Kamsack Times.)

**Images**

## Article Details

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