



## AAC Publications

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

California, Mt. Shasta, Hotlum/Bolam Ridge

**On June 19, a family of seven from Utah attempted to climb the Hotlum/Bolam Ridge route.** By midmorning they had begun the steeper section of the route at 12,300 feet. They were all roped together—with no intermediate protection nor belay anchors—when one of them slipped and fell. The others were dragged off balance. Despite everyone's attempt to self-arrest, they were unable to stop until they all had fallen approximately 500 vertical feet. Miraculously, they came to rest just before hitting a boulder field.

A 17-year-old female suffered a broken tib/fib. The mother of the family sustained a crampon puncture to her calf but was able to self-rescue. Everyone else suffered minor injuries (cuts, abrasions, and contusions from sliding and tumbling on the rough, icy snow surfaces). Immediately after the fall, the family called 911. Climbing ranger Nick Meyers was inserted by California Highway Patrol Helicopter H-14, which quickly hoisted the female climber with the broken leg. The others self-rescued off the mountain.

### **ANALYSIS**

The family stated they had moderate experience and had been practicing for the climb. Conditions on the route were icy, making self-arrest very difficult. This accident occurred at nearly the identical location of a fatality in September the year prior. Less than optimal conditions on Shasta can create problems for the under-equipped or uninitiated. The steep and often icy sections of this route require a level of awareness and experience somewhat higher than that possessed by novice visitors.

(Source: Mt. Shasta Climbing Rangers.)

**Images**

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