



## AAC Publications

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### **Fall on Rock — Inadequate Protection**

New Hampshire, North Conway, Whitehorse Ledge, The Slabs

**On October 5, two guides, Ryan McGuire (37) and Ryan Tilley (26), started up Sliding Board (5.7), a classic eight-pitch route on the Whitehorse Slabs, as a practice climb.** On the fifth pitch (5.6), which follows a faint dike feature, McGuire had led about ten feet out from Tilley's belay when he felt himself slipping. He had not placed any gear above the anchor, and he fell about ten to fifteen feet below Tilley's belay. McGuire had broken his left arm and his right finger, which was bleeding badly.

A little before noon, Tilley called 911 and then started a self-rescue. He rappelled with McGuire while New Hampshire Fish and Game and volunteers from the New Hampshire Mountain Rescue Service responded below, along with a second party of AMGA guides who had been climbing an adjacent route. McGuire and Tilley reached the ground without further incident, with minor assistance.

### **ANALYSIS**

On moderate, hard-to-protect terrain—which guides encounter often—solid movement skills form the basis of safety. Often the best protection is simply not falling off. Especially for guides, who often climb the same route repeatedly, it is easy to become complacent. McGuire wishes he had placed a few pieces past the belay, but is unsure if the terrain would have allowed much more protection. He stressed that he made a good decision by climbing with a partner well-versed in rock rescue. Had Tilley not acted quickly and competently, it would have taken them much longer to reach the ground and medical services. (Source: The Editors.)

**Images**

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