



## AAC Publications

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### **Fatal Fall – Moving Between Rappel Stations**

Canada, British Columbia, Yoho National Park, Hungabee Mountain

**On August 15, a party of three left their bivouac site to ascend the west ridge of Hungabee Mountain (D, 5.6). After reaching the summit, they began their descent. While in the upper third of the route, a climber rappelled, disconnected from the rope, and began to move over to the next rappel station.**

During this process, the climber grabbed a loose hold, which broke and resulted in the climber falling down the west face of Hungabee. The remaining two climbers immediately triggered the SOS on their satellite communication device to initiate a rescue.

A rescue team arrived by helicopter approximately 1.5 hours later. The team located the two climbers high on the ridge and spotted the deceased 32-year-old climber approximately 300 meters (984 feet) below. After surveying the scene, it was determined that the remaining two climbers would be removed from the mountain prior to accessing the deceased. This would minimize rockfall hazard from above and get the survivors off the mountain before an impending storm arrived. The two climbers were heli-slung back down to the staging area, and the fallen climber was then accessed and slung down to the staging area.

### **ANALYSIS**

Transferring efficiently and safely from one rappel to the next set of rappel anchors requires care and an awareness of potential hazards. Whenever possible, it is best to stay tethered to the previous anchor until you've reached the next one.

In certain cases, it's necessary to scramble from the end of one rappel to the next station. When practical, a quick belay may be prudent. When scrambling unroped, it's crucial to exercise extreme caution with loose rock. Hungabee is particularly loose even by Canadian Rockies standards. (Source: Parks Canada.)

## Images



Hungabee Mountain, with the approximate line of the fatal fall.

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