



## AAC Publications

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### **FALL OVER BERGSCHRUND – Inadequate Route-Finding**

Oregon, Mt. Hood, Eliot Glacier

**Two climbers, Person 1 (36) and Person 2 (30), were descending the upper Eliot Glacier from the summit of Mt. Hood in order to approach steeper ice climbs in the Eliot cirque.** Both members of the party had climbed Hood many times and had previously climbed other routes in this area of the mountain.

The team was roped together in a standard glacier travel mode, with approximately 40 feet of rope between them. The remainder of the rope was in Kiwi coils. The slope angle was approximately 45°, with a surface of firm snow.

While downclimbing, the lower climber knowingly stepped onto a snow bridge across the bergschrund. The bridge collapsed when fully weighted, and the climber took a small and inconsequential fall into soft snow on the lower side of the bergschrund, which was filled in by winter snow, a short distance below the lip. The force of the fall pulled Person 2 off balance, and they were unable to self-arrest on the firm surface. Person 2 slid down the slope and also fell into soft snow near the edge of the crack.

Luckily for both climbers, the loose snow on the lower side of the feature resulted in soft landings. Both climbers were uninjured and were able to carry out the rest of their planned objective.

#### **ANALYSIS**

The climbers believe that the primary mistake was choosing to cross the bergschrund on a snow bridge of unknown quality. Options existed for end-running the crevasse, and, in hindsight, that would have been a much better choice. Being roped together without protection did not add any security to this situation and created significant additional hazard for the second climber. (Source: Person 1.)

## Images



The circle marks the location of a fall at the bergschrund on the Eliot Glacier of Mt. Hood. Fortunately, neither climber involved was injured.

## Article Details

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