



## AAC Publications

---

### **FATAL RAPPEL ERROR – Anchor Failure**

Washington, Leavenworth, Icicle Buttress

**On July 4, Bryan Caldwell (44) and a partner were climbing R&D (4 pitches, 5.6) on the Icicle Buttress.** Around 1:15 p.m., bad weather moved in and the team decided to retreat via rappel. After Caldwell's partner reached the base, she heard Caldwell fall and hit the ground. Caldwell's anchor had failed, and he fell approximately 100 feet, dying from blunt trauma to the head.

#### **ANALYSIS**

Caldwell had 20 years of climbing experience. The pair made a good decision to retreat in the face of bad weather. They were also prudent to use at least two pieces in their anchor, though it appears the gear placements were inadequate. Two pieces of gear—a cam and a nut—were found attached to Caldwell's rope. Whether he had started to rappel or had simply weighted the anchor before rappelling is unknown. (Sources: [Wenatcheeworld.com](http://Wenatcheeworld.com) and [Climbing.com](http://Climbing.com).)

## Images

## Article Details

Author	Wenatcheeworld.com and Climbing.com
Publication	ANAM
Volume	13
Issue	76
Page	87
Copyright Date	2023
Article Type	Accident reports