



## AAC Publications

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### **Stranded Climbers — Inexperience**

Canada, Alberta, Banff National Park, Mt. Cory

**At 12:20 p.m. on June 13, a party of two requested a rescue from Mt. Cory in Banff National Park.**

The party was three pitches up a rock route called Hoka Hey! (9 pitches, 5.9) and had just completed a sustained 5.8/5.9 corner pitch. The party felt dehydrated due to the heat that day and their exposure to direct sunlight.

Although they had planned to climb in the cool morning, the approach to the route took longer than expected. This delay placed them on the initial pitches of a long climb during the heat of the day.

The party was new to climbing in the area but had recently completed another multi-pitch route called Aftonroe (8 pitches, 5.7), also on Mt. Cory. Hoka Hey! was a step up in grade from Aftonroe, though well within their technical ability. Unfortunately, the additional challenges of a longer approach, route-finding, sustained exposed climbing, mixed traditional and bolt protection, and the heat put them beyond their comfort zone. The party had also dropped a helmet and did not feel confident in their descent options with a single rope.

### **ANALYSIS**

Although the party was capable, they underestimated the length and serious nature of the route. They may have avoided rescue by saving the climb for a cooler day, BY selecting a climb in the shade, or by building experience on smaller multi-pitch routes before attempting Hoka Hey!

There are escape options on the route, but the party was underequipped and did not appear confident in their ability to navigate their way down. It is unknown how much research the party had done before embarking on the route. The climber who dropped their helmet was the more experienced leader, and the other climber was relatively new to the sport. Clipping gear into the anchor and not removing your helmet on a multi-pitch route both reduce the chance of inadvertently dropping equipment. (Source: Ian Jackson, Parks Canada.)

**Images**

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