



AAC Publications

Near Miss — Open Grigri

Oregon, Climbing Gym

On March 24, while at a rock gym, Bystander 1 and Bystander 2 were alerted by a belayer that he needed assistance. A climber was top-roping near the end of a route and the belayer's Grigri was not fully closed. This left the outer plate open and the rope exposed.

The belayer told the climber to stay in place and started to remove the rope from the Grigri while placing the lower portion of the rope under his foot. Bystander 1 grabbed the rope above the belayer's head to help safeguard the climber. Bystander 2 took a segment of the rope and threaded it into a separate Grigri to put the climber back on belay. Bystander 2 then pulled in the slack and safely lowered the climber to the floor. Both the belayer and the climber appeared to be experienced and familiar with the Grigri and both claimed that a safety check had been performed before the climber started up. No one was hurt.

ANALYSIS

Complacency or distraction led to the belayer's Grigri being unsecured. This could have led to the rope popping out of the device and potentially dropping the climber. Fortunately, Bystander 1 and Bystander 2 were close by, wearing harnesses, and had belay devices. The belayer's impulse to remove the rope from the Grigri might have resulted in a ground fall had Bystanders 1 and 2 not been able to intercede. Thorough safety checks with visual and verbalized confirmation would have prevented this near miss. Gym staff reviewed security camera footage and concluded that Bystander 1 and Bystander 2 took the proper action. (Source: Ruby Piechocki.)

Images



This re-creation shows an unclosed Grigri during a simulated belay. Note that the rope can remain threaded while the device is unclosed. A cursory visual assessment may not reveal that the device is open.

Article Details

Author	Ruby Piechocki
Publication	ANAM
Volume	13
Issue	78
Page	74
Copyright Date	2025
Article Type	Accident reports