



## AAC Publications

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### Fall on Rock

Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Middle Teton, Southwest Couloir

**On July 24, a 22-year-old female climber fell on steep snow while descending the Southwest Couloir Route on the Middle Teton (12,809 feet).** The fall occurred while the climber was traveling on a shortcut to avoid the usual path to the saddle below and thereby make an early entry into the upper South Fork of Garnet Canyon. The reporting party relayed that the patient had a “serious” hip injury and was unable to walk. The climber was short-hauled by helicopter to an awaiting ambulance and taken to the hospital.

Several weeks later (August 17) on the same shortcut, a 21-year-old female lost her footing and slid into a moat near the exit of the Middle Teton’s Southwest Couloir and the saddle between the South and Middle Tetons. Two climbing rangers were inserted via helicopter, and after assessing the patient, they treated significant and bleeding head lacerations. She and one rescuer were short-hauled out. She was then transferred to ambulance personnel, but despite the severity of her injuries, she refused further medical treatment.

### ANALYSIS

Both of these events illustrate an almost annual summer occurrence in the Tetons in which climbing rangers respond to accidents in this area (see ANAC 2024 and ANAC 2016). Climbers are advised that although it is shorter, the shortcut terrain is deceptively steep and often holds snow underfoot. The longer, gentler route descending to the true saddle between the South and Middle Tetons is often more efficient. (Source: Grand Teton National Park Search and Rescue Report.)

**Images**

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