



AAC Publications

Leader Fall on Ice — Insecure Tool Placements

Canada, Alberta, Jasper National Park, Tangle River

Climbers (blue circle) awaiting rescue at the base of the Rick Blak Memorial Route. A climber fell near the top of the pitch and was moved to an open area to be extracted. Photo: Parks, Canada

On December 27, three climbers were attempting the Rick Blak Memorial Route (WI5), a 30-meter ice climb in Jasper National Park. The leader was nearing the top of the pitch when her ice tools popped, resulting in a ten meter fall caught by a 13-centimeter ice screw. During the fall, her crampon caught on the ice and was ripped from her boot. The resulting force broke her lower leg.

The team lowered the injured climber and moved her to an open area away from the cliffs. Using a VHF radio, the group contacted Parks Canada SAR directly. Rescuers were able to heli-sling the group out.

ANALYSIS

The climber had placed adequate protection and was reported to be just above her last screw. The party was very experienced, and their VHF radio facilitated a quick rescue with good communications. Moving the patient to a safe open area reduced risk to rescuers. The team had gotten an early start and thus, when the accident happened, it was still early in the day. This gave ample time for the rescue during the short December daylight hours. The accident was a good reminder that all falls on ice can be dangerous and that it is always a good idea to test tool placements and climb well within one's abilities. (Source: Parks Canada.)

Images



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