

dent to record the name and phone number of those who assisted in the recovery effort, it turned out that only about half of those involved had been recorded. As a result, many of these people (myself included) who had significant contact with the victim's blood did not learn about the lab test until long after the time period during which a prophylactic treatment for Hepatitis B is useful—typically 7 to 10 days after contact. Fortunately, it was later discovered that the initial test results were incorrect.

If you are involved in a rescue, make sure you find out who you can contact to get any medical information that may be relevant to rescuers, and follow it up. Climbers often have many nicks and cuts on their hands after a day of climbing, and in this age of serious blood-borne diseases it is a good idea to carry a pair of latex gloves and some prepackaged handi-wipes in the event you assist in a rescue or recovery. (Source: Chris Leger)

(Editor's Note: Latex gloves are standard items for even the smallest of First Aid Kits. On the other hand, First Aid Kits do not yet seem to be a standard item carried by climbers. At places like Seneca, the Gunks, Joshua Tree, etc., day packs are often left on the ground. Having a FAK in them is a good idea.)

FALLING SNOW/ICE—CORNICIE COLLAPSE

Washington, Mount Rainier, Panorama Point

On April 30, Rainier Mountaineering, Inc., was conducting the second day of their annual guide tryouts. There were 52 applicants and about 15 RMI guides who had hiked to the Panorama Point area to conduct training/evaluation. About the 6800-foot level, the group took a break to rest, put on additional clothing, and awaited the next phase of the tryouts. While they were resting, guides Pete Whittaker and Paul Maier began to scout the area that they refer to as "Upper Cornice." They were evaluating a route which would lead the group safely past the cornice to their standard training area toward Golden Gate. It was determined that the group could safely pass well to the west of the cornice and descend around the southern end of the cornice. This would allow the guides to evaluate the applicants' descent skills as well as lead them into the traditional training area using what appeared to be a safe route. Whittaker and Maier then rejoined the group and Whittaker met with the other guides to start dividing the applicants into smaller groups. Maier, Cate Casson (c.34) and John Lucia returned toward the cornice to further explore and kick in a descent route. As Maier got lower and could see the underside of the cornice, he could tell that it was dangerously overhung, so he shouted to the other guides to stay on his tracks or to the west of them. He also placed a ski pole to act as a marker and further instructed the other guides to stay to the west of his pole. Within 30 seconds or so after warning the others of the overhang, the cornice collapsed. Maier stated that it ran from where he stood about 150 feet, all the way to its northern end. In the debris he could see Casson lying on her back. Maier shouted to Casson to determine her condition, and she replied that she thought she might have a broken back. At this point, Whittaker assumed the role of site commander and sent guides to Paradise to get medical

gear. Several other guides attended to Casson's injuries. When the backboard and litter arrived, Casson was stabilized and placed in the litter and then transported to Paradise through Edith Creek Basin.

According to Cate Casson's account, she was in the middle of the cornice about 30 yards to the west of the lip when she began to scout. She began to angle toward the edge and got within 30 feet of the lip when she began to parallel the cornice. At the closest point to the lip, Casson estimated that she was about 20 feet from the edge. She began to travel west away from the lip when she heard a loud "pop" and saw a crack open up under her feet. She fell backwards and was pinched together by two large blocks of snow as she fell. She landed on her back. Her estimate of the fall distance was approximately 20 vertical feet. She tried to move her legs, but could not, so she waited for the other guides to effect her rescue.

Paul Maier yelled up to Peter Whittaker that Cate had fallen with the cornice and was now visible within the blocks at the base. Peter instructed Paul to get a head count of the guides and put RMI supervisor George Dunn in charge of the applicants. George immediately took the applicants away from the accident site, chose three or four guides to help him, and sent all other guides to the accident site for assistance. An avalanche guard was posted above the cornice and once initial medical information regarding Cate's status was relayed, Peter communicated via radio and cell phone to NPS Comm center and RMI base in Ashford. RMI guides Paul Maier, Brent Okita, Brenda Walsh, and Kent Wagner attended Cate—all EMT or OEC certified. RMI guides John Lucia, Matt Farmer, and Ben Marshall were sent to Paradise to locate and bring back oxygen, backboard, trauma pack, and sled. While waiting for medical supplies, Cate was treated for shock and suspected lower body, crushing injuries. Vitals were taken systematically. Upon arrival of medical equipment, Cate was secured to the backboard with a cervical collar and then placed into a sled. Evacuation from the accident site to Paradise was via Edith Creek Basin.

In a follow-up call to RMI, it was learned that Casson had suffered fractures to the L-1 and L-2 vertebrae, and although she was expected to make a full recovery, she would be in a body cast for several months and then need to undergo extensive physical rehabilitation. (Source: Rick Kirchner, NPS Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park)

FALLING ICE, NO HARD HAT

Washington, Mount Rainier, Ingraham Glacier

On June 4, an ice fall occurred from the top of an 80- to 100-foot ice cliff that the climbing route crosses underneath. In the path were Rainier Mountaineering, Inc., guides and clients. The ice broke apart and spread rapidly, gaining speed. It was dark at the time, and thus difficult to see what was coming down—and where. Two climbers, both guides, were seriously injured, including facial laceration and head trauma. They were able to walk back to Camp Muir, but needed to be evacuated by helicopter from there.

Three others were injured but were able to walk out. (Source: From a Mount Rainier Case Incident Report)