

dropping in over the top of them. In this instance, there was at least one skier known to be hiking up Hillman's with the intention of descending Dodge's Drop. It's quite likely that this skier would have triggered the pocket if the climbers had not. Whether the hazard is avalanches, crevasses, undermined snow, etc., it's always a good idea to assess for hazards before descending from above.

### **FALL ON SNOW – UNABLE TO SELF-ARREST**

#### **New Hampshire, Tuckerman Ravine, Left gully**

On March 14, a woman fell approximately 1,200 feet from near the top of Left Gully in Tuckerman Ravine. She was unable to self-arrest and quickly lost her ice ax, as she rapidly accelerated on the very slick surface. Along the way, her crampon caught the surface, resulting in an open angulated lower leg fracture. She also suffered arm and rib injuries before coming to a stop low in the floor of Tuckerman Ravine. Snow Rangers, MWVSP, and AMC personnel responded, treated her injuries, and packaged her into a litter. The litter was belayed down the Little Headwall to the top of the Sherburne Ski Trail. From there a snowmobile transported the litter to an ambulance waiting at Pinkham Notch Visitor Center.

### **FALL ON ICE – UNABLE TO SELF-ARREST**

#### **New Hampshire, Huntington Ravine, Central Gully**

Approximately 15 minutes after being notified of the incident described above, Snow Rangers learned of a second incident unfolding in Huntington Ravine. A mountaineer had fallen from somewhere between the top of the Fan and the ice bulge in Central Gully. He slid approximately 1,000 feet through icy talus before coming to rest near the base of Huntington Ravine. He suffered numerous significant injuries, including a mid-shaft femur fracture. Bystanders began to provide care while assistance was sought out. By the time the Snow Rangers arrived, the victim was conscious and in severe pain. He was splinted and packaged into a litter, which was belayed one rope length to flat ground at the base of the Ravine, due to the icy surface. The USFS snowcat transported the victim to a waiting ambulance at Pinkham Notch Visitor Center.

#### **Analysis**

These two incidents have one strong central theme—that sliding falls on icy surfaces are very difficult to stop. In these cases, the crust was formed three days prior to the incidents with a warm, wet day followed by a sharp drop in temperature. Surfaces immediately became incredibly hard and slick and stayed that way through the Saturday. The morning's Avalanche Advisory stated, "The main safety concern today is the potential for long sliding falls due to the hard icy snow conditions... Bring your crampons, ice

ax, and mountaineering experience with you today so you can get around in steep terrain and successfully self-arrest if you slip. If you don't have this equipment and the ability to use it you should stick to low angled terrain.”

One lesson we can all take home from these incidents is the importance of practicing your skills in all conditions and avoiding steep terrain on days when the difficulty of the conditions exceeds your ability to self-arrest. Many thanks go out to the numerous bystanders and volunteers who helped out on these incidents. (Source for the above three incidents: [www.tuckerman.org](http://www.tuckerman.org) and Justin Preisendorfer, Snow Ranger/Backcountry & Wilderness Supervisor)

## **FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE BELAY – LOWERING ERROR**

### **New Hampshire, Rumney, Armed and Dangerous**

On Today (April 19) on the route Armed and Dangerous, a seasoned climber was lowered off the end of his rope by another seasoned climber. Both climbers had joked regarding the length of the rope/climb prior to starting the route.

The climber fell 12 feet onto his head and upper back, sustaining only a small head injury and some apparent nerve damage to his arms/pelvis. The climber was extricated by 15+ climbers and 10+ rescuers. He never lost consciousness, and it appears that he will recover fully after some rest and relaxation.

### **Analysis**

He was lucky not only to fall from where he did, but how he did and with so many people around.

Let this be a lesson to tie a knot in the end of your rope, or at least look at the end when lowering off a climb, especially one you haven't been on many times. (Source: Edited from a Mountain Project posting by Ladd Raine)

## **FALL ON ROCK, CLIMBING ALONE**

### **Nevada, Red Rocks, Rainbow Wall – The Original Route**

A climber, Josh, fell from the second pitch (140 feet) to the base of the climb. Three climbers were on the route. Two were climbing together, and the victim of the fall was alone climbing by himself. One person was climbing from the 2nd to the 4th pitch. Two were on separate anchors at the 2nd pitch. One of the two climbers at the 2nd pitch was belaying the climber en route to the 4th pitch. Josh was at the second pitch also and was in the process of setting up a z-rig, or some kind of mechanical advantage system, to haul his big-wall bag from the base of the climb when he dropped six carabiners. He decided to rappel a fixed line in order to retrieve the carabiners. He had a pulley attached at the anchors that was attached to his haul bag and to him. At this point, nobody is sure how it happened, or what he was doing, but he detached from the anchor and somehow fell. As he fell,