

## **AVALANCHE**

### **Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Bow Peak, West Face**

Two climbers were glissading down the west face of Bow Peak at a height of 2800 meters at 1800 hours on 19 March 1977. The sky was overcast and the temperature about  $-15^{\circ}\text{C}$ , and the snow surface was old, settled snow over surface hoar. They triggered a hard slab avalanche having a fracture 1.5 to two meters deep; the resulting avalanche 300 meters down a 35-degree slope over a width of 80 meters deposited a maximum depth of 4.5 meters. One was caught in the avalanche and recovered alive by his companion at 1840 hours. The companion left the victim at the site and went for help, which was not reached until 0715 hours on 20 March. The rescue party returned to find the victim dead. (Source: UNESCO Report on Destructive Avalanches, 1977.)

## **AVALANCHE**

### **Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Lake Louise**

Doug McKay was making a second ski descending traverse of the slope of Big Beehive above Lake Agnes at 1245 hours on 26 March 1977 when the snow fractured at the line of the first traverse. He was carried 300–400 meters onto Lake Agnes and luckily lost his skis. He was buried waist deep but was able to dig himself out. He made his way to the Chateau with some difficulty. (Source: D. McKay)

## **AVALANCHE**

### **Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Howard Douglas Creek**

Twenty clients of Canadian Mountain Holidays and three other persons left Sunshine Village ski area on skis with a guide at 1000 hours on 27 March 1977, bound for Citadel Pass. They were to be carried by helicopter from the pass to Assiniboine Lodge. Two guides were to be with the party, but only one accompanied it to Citadel Pass. The skiing ability of the party ranged from expert to low. No one had an avalanche beacon or a cord. The guide had the only shovel and the only probe. There had been heavy snowfalls which had not yet compacted, and the snow had been unstable for some time, as had been publicized by the news media. The Warden's hut at Sunshine Village contained posted warnings of extreme avalanche danger. It was snowing and windy, with low clouds and limited visibility.

Nevertheless, the guide, who had to register the tour at the Warden's hut, decided to proceed. The party sank deeply into the uncompact snow and was traveling slowly. After lunch, the guide left the normal route along the plateau without telling the party. He went into the Howard Douglas Creek valley on the lee (east) side of the plateau because he was concerned, as he said later, that there might be a white-out on the plateau and avalanches from Quartz Ridge. About 1300–1330 hours the leading skiers were crossing a steep open area when the