

While the Kautz Glacier route can be an ice-free snow climb until midseason, several parties have underestimated the difficulty of late season conditions. As the winter snow cover disappears and more ice presents itself, there is a need for more ice climbing equipment. It is difficult to predict how much ice climbing gear may be needed given the variety of conditions possible. It is best to prepare for the worst and bring a few extra screws. (Source: Mike Gauthier, SAR Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park)

LOSS OF CONTROL—VOLUNTARY GLISSADE, FAULTY USE OF CRAMPONS **Washington, Mount Rainier, Muir Snowfield**

On October 3, shortly after 4:30 p.m., Chris Beoffoli (34) began his descent from Camp Muir. While descending near 7,800 feet on the Muir Snowfield, Beoffoli, according to a report from him, "...fell back and because it was steep, I started to pick up some speed. I didn't have my ice ax within reach and, even though I should have known better, I instinctively put my heel down to stop myself and the metal teeth (of his crampons) stuck into the snow while my body kept moving." This resulted in a severely fractured ankle.

At 5:15 p.m. Mt. Rainier National Park received the 911 cell phone call requesting a rescue. Shortly after sunset, an eight person NPS ground evacuation team began their ascent to the accident site. They arrived on scene two hours later and assessed Beoffoli's condition, packaged and lowered him back to Paradise in a litter. They arrived at the trailhead at 1:00 a.m. Beoffoli was released into the care of his partner who drove him a hospital for treatment. (Source: Mike Gauthier, SAR Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park and a report from Mr. Beoffoli.)

AVALANCHE

Washington, Mount Rainier, Ingraham Glacier

On October 24, climbers Aaron Koester and Matt Little contemplated a summit ascent from their high camp at Cadaver Gap, but due to a late start the pair instead decided to train and explore and the crevasses on the Ingraham Glacier. Near 11,700 feet, the team entered a large cavernous crevasse close to the Disappointment Cleaver. They traversed some 75 yards into the crevasse and found an exit ramp out the other side. While ascending the 35-40 degree exit ramp, the snow slope fractured and slid.

The slab was estimated to be about eight to 14 inches thick and ran roughly 150 feet. The avalanche swept both climbers back into the crevasse. Koester was pinned against the ice wall of the crevasse and was completely buried by the debris. Little was partially buried; only his arm and head were exposed. Little spent about 30 minutes extricating himself from the entrapment before beginning the search for his partner. By the time he located and freed Koester's head, Koester had no pulse and was very blue.