

The belayer should anchor if the stance is unstable. But the most important point is **ALWAYS ANCHOR OR KNOT THE BELAY ROPE!** Do this even on ridiculously short climbs to maintain the habit and to set a good example. (Source: John Dill, NPS Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

DARKNESS – STRANDED

California, Pinnacles National Monument, Condor Crag

On the evening of November 15th, park staff assisted two climbers down from a climbing route after they had become stranded due to nightfall. Both climbers were uninjured.

The climbers were able to place a cellphone call to a friend around 6:00 p.m. after they could no longer climb in darkness. They were near the top of a 500-foot route on the Condor Crag formation in the High Peaks area of the park. They were in different locations on the route and could not complete the final 100 feet without additional light. Rangers contacted the party via cellphone and determined their location and condition before the phone battery was exhausted. With an overnight forecast of 25 degrees F and gusting winds, rangers and search and rescue team members were dispatched to climb to their location. The crew of a California Highway Patrol helicopter located the pair using infrared radar and a powerful “Night Sun” floodlight. Assisted by monument staff, the climbers then completed the route and descent. By the time they got down at 1:00 a.m., they’d been on the route for 14 hours. (Source: Brett Hergert, Operations Supervisor) *(Editor’s Note: In the not too distant past, these climbers would have spent a night out—and maybe worse. Cellphones and the technical equipment available to rescue personnel have changed the game of climbing considerably. Maybe we should revive the notion of creating no-rescue zones...)*

FALL ON ROCK, GEAR SLING CAUGHT ON CAM DURING FALL – STRANGULATING CLIMBER

California, Kings Canyon National Park, Obelisk

My name is Patrick Callery. Our friend David Shirley and I were climbing with Ishun Chan on the South Face route of the Obelisk when she was tragically killed on November 8. This report of the accident is provided with the hopeful intent to provide some answers for her many friends and loved ones and with the hope that her tragic passing may in some way better inform the climbing community of potential dangers in our sport.

Sometime in early October I pitched Ishun on a trip to the Obelisk. A classic backcountry rock with an arduous approach, the Obelisk had been on my to-do list for years, and Ishun was enthusiastic about joining me for it. We half expected we’d eventually cancel the trip plan given the lateness of the season, but continued fair and mild mountain weather throughout