

Calgary climber survives 20-metre plunge

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Google Map image of Victoria Peak, about 20 km south of Pincher Creek, Alta.

The combined efforts of first responders and searchers helped rescue an injured Calgary climber from a mountain near Pincher Creek.

About 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Fire Rescue and Mounties learned a climber had fallen on Victoria Peak, about 20 km south of Pincher Creek.

The 50-year-old Calgary man was descending the mountain from the summit when he fell while crossing a snowy area and slid about 20 metres into a tree, RCMP Cpl. Jeff Feist.

“It was quite difficult terrain — they were up in an area with lots of snow banks,” said Feist, adding it’s believed the man was part of a group of six climbers, though only four went to the summit.

“The gullies are still full of heavy-packed snow.”

The group belongs to a Calgary-based mountaineering club, said Feist.

After hitting the tree, the man suffered serious, but non-life threatening chest injuries and was unable to continue down the mountain.

First responders and Pincher Creek Search and Rescue personnel hiked about 3 km to stabilize the injured man before Alpine Helicopters’ public safety chopper from Canmore arrived and dropped two additional helpers off.

“They harnessed up two guys, dropped them off where the guy was hurt,” said Janet Jones, president of Pincher Creek Search and Rescue.

The helicopter later returned to pick up the injured man in a sling and transported him to the base where he was put into an ambulance and taken to a hospital in Pincher Creek.

Jones said the team work between everyone involved — including the helicopter personnel — made for a much quicker rescue than it would have been otherwise.

“Any later and the helicopter wouldn’t have been able to come,” she said.

“We’d have packaged him in a regular stretcher and we could have had to carry him over the rocks and through the trees.

“It’s one of those things we train all year for.”

The unidentified man is expected to recover from his injuries.

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