



ICE CLIMBING HAZARD

AVALANCHES

SPIN DRIFT

FALLING ICE

AND BOWLING BALLS

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Photog Cred: Seth Keena-Levin-Goat's Beard 2017

OVERHEAD AVALANCHE HAZARD

“ANY OVERHEAD AVALANCHE SLOPE WITH A POTENTIAL PROBLEM” ~Former CAIC Forecaster-Brad Sawtell



**Polar Circus WI5
Icefields Park Way,
Alberta**

Photo Alex Ratson of
climber Quentin Roberts
Jan 2017

OVERHEAD AVALANCHE HAZARD

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North Buttress of Mt. Hunter, Denali National Park

Common Overhead Avalanche Problem: Red Flags

1. Climbers should avoid overhead Avalanche Hazard when...
the hazard is Considerable, High or Extreme

Natural Dry Loose Avalanches

- ~Approx. 12" of snow. Then any additional 4"-6" of new or high rates
- ~High Rates Accumulation: 1"/hr for more than 3hrs or >1"/hr for 1hr.
- ~First Input Solar Radiation after accumulation
- ~Steady Wind w/ Available snow: 10-15mph or gusting

Natural Wet Loose Avalanches

- ~Temps above Freezing for 24hrs
- ~First > 0C period after recent accumulation
- ~Rain or warm snow events
- ~First Solar Radiation coupled with >0C

Slab Avalanche

- ~Terrain on approaches or walk off decent
- ~Triggered by a Dry Loose or Wet Loose
- ~Tree Bombs triggers during a warming event

Other Overhead Problems

Spin Drift

~blowing snow funneling into steep draw

Falling ice/ Ice mass wasting

~Very warm or Extremely cold

Cornice Drop

~Severe Winds; building to critical mass

~Warm Temps or Solar input

~Traveling animal or human

Photo: John Scurlock