



June 1999

ALASKA FACE Facts

Department of Health and Social Services
Division of Public Health-Section of CHEMS
Occupational Injury Prevention Program

Assistant Mountaineering Guide Falls on Denali



On June 6, 1998, a 21-year-old assistant mountaineering guide died when he fell from a ridge on Denali (Mt. McKinley). The guide was part of a five-man team that was descending from a 17,200-foot camp along the West Buttress. During their descent, the guide witnessed one of the climbers in the team slip while descending a particularly exposed and rocky section of the ridge route. The climber was having difficulty regaining his footing. The team was on a running belay with the guide at the end; the guide unclipped from the rope and walked past the climbers between himself and the fallen climber. The victim lost his footing as he moved toward the fallen climber's position and slid down the slope toward a glacier. He was unable to arrest his fall with his ice ax. His body was later recovered.

Based on the findings of the investigation, to prevent similar occurrences, employers should:

- **Develop, implement, and enforce a comprehensive written safety program.**
- **Ensure that guides are trained in proper assist and rescue techniques.**

To view previous FACE reports please visit the Occupational Injury Prevention Program website:

http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chems/occupation_injury

or

Call or fax your request to:

907-269-5221 (phone) 907-269-5236 (fax)

To receive the latest FACE updates via the Internet please send an email to djilly@health.state.ak.us