

GLOBAL RESCUE EVACUATES HIKER AFTER 50 FOOT FALL

Located in the foothills of the Peruvian Andes, the Colca Canyon has been described by National Geographic Adventure Magazine as “the world’s deepest canyon ... where frequent unpassable stages require brutal portages, and where canyon walls rise to heights of 12,000 feet, leaving no possibility of hiking out.”

While traversing a narrow trail at 8,500 feet, Global Rescue Member Blackstone Dilworth lost his footing and tumbled 50 feet down a steep slope into the canyon. The expedition’s medical officer observed lacerations and other injuries to Mr. Dilworth’s hands, arms, head and thorax and determined he needed to be evacuated for further treatment and evaluation.

Within 20 minutes of receiving the call, Global Rescue activated assets in the region that included both American and Peruvian fixed and rotor-wing aircraft. Global Rescue operators then instructed the hiking party to build a signal fire and to identify a landing zone to accommodate the helicopter. Global Rescue also had a team prepped and ready to perform a ground rescue if the helicopter wasn’t able to land, which is frequently the case in very rough terrain. The helicopter successfully identified the party’s signal fire and evacuated Mr. Dilworth. Once he was extracted, Global Rescue had a medically configured turboprop airplane rendezvous with the helicopter at the nearest available airstrip. From this remote airstrip, Mr. Dilworth was flown to Lima where his wounds were cleaned and bandaged prior to his evacuation to the United States.

“I thought I was going to die,” Mr. Dilworth said. “Global Rescue saved my life.”



Challenges

- ▶ Extremely remote location
- ▶ High altitude
- ▶ Rough terrain and limited area for landing aircraft

Outcome

Successful field rescue and evacuation of Mr. Dilworth despite high altitudes and rough terrain.