

**On December 23, 1996, Whistler Mountain in British Columbia, Canada was the site of the worst chairlift accident in the province's history. Around 3 p.m., while skiers were riding downhill, four chairs detached from the cable and fell 30 feet. Several other chairs slid down the cable and collided with chairs in front. Two passengers died and 10 others were hospitalized.**

**Investigators from British Columbia's Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Engineering and Inspection Branch determined that the accident was caused by the grips that attach the chairs to the transport cable. The grips relied on gravity to maintain contact with the cable.**

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**Published On Tue Dec 16 2008**

**THE CANADIAN PRESS**

**WHISTLER, B.C. – What was to be a day of fun and skiing turned into a terrifying ordeal for several dozen people who were jolted and then left stranded in gondolas after a support tower partially collapsed.**

**RCMP say at least 10 people were hurt in the accident that happened at about 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, though none of the injuries are believed to be life-threatening. Fifty-three people were rescued, some after spending three hours in the air.**

**Doug Forseth, senior vice-president for Whistler Blackcomb ski resort, said that "structural failure" on a tower on Blackcomb Mountain's Excalibur gondola was the cause of the accident.**

**While a crane was brought in to support the leaning tower, fire crews worked quickly to evacuate three cars that were the most in danger.**

**One of the gondola cars hit a bus shelter, while two more were left dangling before the broken tower.**