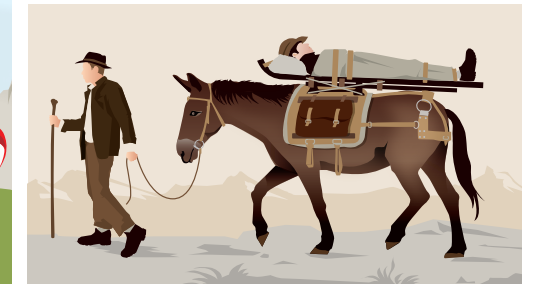


Help for hikers in distress

Hiking is one of the Swiss population's favourite pastimes: 2.7 million people engage in this leisure pursuit – from the avid sports lover to the Sunday day tripper. According to the Swiss Council for Accident Prevention bfu, around 37,000 hikers injure themselves every year. The Rega crews rescue between 1,000 and 1,300 hikers in distress each year, the majority of whom have suffered an accident.



Rescue through the ages

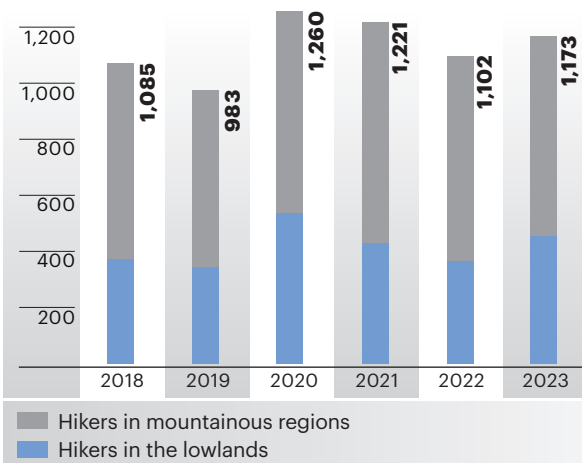


Seventy years ago, injured hikers had to be transported back down into the valley either **carried by their companions or on the back of a mule**. Such rescues took a long time and were extremely strenuous for everyone involved. **Nowadays, Rega's helicopters reach every location in Switzerland – with the exception of Canton Valais – within 15 minutes' flying time.** Nevertheless, terrestrial mountain rescue has lost none of its importance: the Rega Operations Centre mobilises the **rescue teams from the Swiss Alpine Club SAC** whenever rescue operations have to be carried out on the ground or a Rega crew needs assistance in difficult terrain.

Illustration: Daniel Karrer

Every third rescue mission for hikers in the lowlands

In rough terrain, far from any roads, even a broken foot can be a case for Rega. **Besides injury, illness is also a reason for raising the alarm.** Added to these are missions for uninjured hikers who find themselves in an emergency situation: often a timely rescue can prevent serious injury. Rega comes to the aid of 1,000–1,300 hikers every year (see graph). Its helicopter crews fly to **wherever people go hiking – therefore not just in mountainous regions, but also in the lowlands.** The fluctuations in the **mission numbers reflect the weather conditions.** Consequently, more people spend time hiking in the years when the weather is fine, which in turn results in more missions.



K Checklist when raising the alarm

In inaccessible terrain, it is advisable to call out Rega directly via emergency number **1414** or using the Rega app. **Uninjured hikers can also request Rega's assistance in an emergency:** the flight coordinators can often **provide assistance over the phone or if necessary mobilise the mountain rescuers from the SAC or a helicopter crew.** The following information helps the Rega Operations Centre to swiftly dispatch the appropriate help:

- 1 Where are you exactly?**
Coordinates, place name, locality, prominent landmarks. Tip: the Rega app automatically transmits your coordinates to the Operations Centre.
- 2 Who can be contacted at the accident scene, and how?**
Full name, telephone number
- 3 What happened exactly?**
How did the accident happen?
What did you see?
- 4 How many people are involved?**
Number of casualties, nature of their injuries
- 5 What is the situation at the accident site?**
Possible to land a helicopter?
Obstacles such as cables, power lines, antennae?
- 6 What are the weather conditions at the accident site?**
Visibility? Rain? Wind?