



MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION, ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION

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MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION OPPOSES CHARGING FOR RESCUE

For over 50 years, when a hunter or hiker stumbles and falls, a child wanders away from a picnic, or when other outdoor enthusiasts take a wrong turn, the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA), has been there to help them, free of charge.

In light of recent events and growing stories about the cost of rescue, the MRA, Rocky Mountain Region is compelled to reaffirm its opposition to charging subjects or agencies for the cost of their rescue.

“Charging subjects for their rescues can be dangerous for many reasons,” explained Charley Shimanski, MRA Vice President. Shimanski, who served on a U.S. Senate-mandated panel that studied charging climbers on Mt. McKinley for their rescues, added, “Often people will delay calling for help when they fear a cost, and in the mountains, that delay in the call for help can increase the risk to rescuers.”

He added, “The vast majority of rescue services in the United States are provided by teams of unpaid professional rescue mountaineers who give up their own time to participate in search and rescue activities. The typical search and rescue mission is over within a matter of a few hours, and with the vast majority of the work performed by unpaid professional volunteers, the costs are generally very low”, stated Shimanski.

The MRA, Rocky Mountain Region wishes to remind the public that while many governmental agencies have a need to address cost defrayment, there are already alternatives to the issue of charging for rescue - nearly every county in Colorado has an expert wilderness search and rescue team that provides professional search and rescue at NO cost and with NO plans to charge in the future.

MRA, Rocky Mountain Region is composed of teams from the states of Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming. The Teams and the Region have a long-established policy opposing charging people for the cost of search and rescue missions. These teams undergo the most rigorous accreditation process in the entire nation in technical rock rescue, search and avalanche rescue. In Colorado alone, member teams perform on average 1,000 missions per year at no charge to their subjects, or cost to taxpayers, or local government.

The MRA Rocky Mountain Region is deeply concerned that the recent media focus on some municipalities and agencies policies of charging people for rescue has given the public an incorrect and potentially dangerous view of outdoor safety; and it is the clear and consistent policy of the MRA that people should never and will never be charged with paying for rescue.

For more information go to: www.mra.org.