

Mountain Rescue Association of Slovenia

Mountain Rescue Association of Slovenia
(Gorska reševalna zveza Slovenije)
SI-4101 Kranj
Bleiweisova cesta 34, p.p. 245



T: +386 4 238 27 27
F: +386 4 238 27 25
E: grzs@siol.net

Prompt and appropriate action is of utmost importance when an accident happens in the mountains. It is vital to call the rescue service without hesitation. If an accident happens in an area that is not accessible by an ambulance, mountain rescuers of the Mountain Rescue Association of Slovenia (MRAS) will dash to the scene.

MRAS will try to rescue anybody free of charge, with or without insurance. Anybody with the basic health insurance is entitled to receive helicopter rescue service in case of an injury or sickness for free.

To reach the rescue service in Slovenia, you have to dial the emergency phone number 112.

If you need help or you are in troubles, call 112 without hesitation!

The mission and main activity of MRAS is to voluntarily help people in accidents in the mountains or areas where access is difficult. MRAS's scope of activities also includes preventive measures and education of its members and other mountain visitors.

The origins of mountain rescuing in Slovenia date back to 16 June, 1912, when a rescue base was established in Kranjska Gora as part of the then Slovenian Mountaineering Organisation. Since 2006, MRAS has been registered as an independent organization and a member of the International Commission for Alpine Rescue – IKAR. MRAS consists of 17 independent mountain rescue organisations (basic units) that cover the entire territory of Slovenia. MRAS functions as an integral part of the system for the safety and protection against natural and other disasters in Slovenia.

Coordination between individual organisations (basic units) is in the hands of the MRAS board, led by its president, who is also the president of MRAS.

Expert skills and training for the rescuers is provided by expert commissions of the MRAS board

- education and rescue techniques,
- medical services,
- rescuing from avalanches,
- equipment and communication,
- rescue flights,
- information and analyses.

Rescue services, provided by MRAS, can be divided into

- helicopter rescue operations,
- traditional rescuing,
- rescuing from avalanches and
- search for missing persons

Helicopter rescuing is the fastest method and is used if only weather and terrain conditions allow it. It is performed by specially trained flying mountain rescuers, assisted by flying doctors, helicopter crews and, if necessary, also other mountain rescue units.

Accidents often happen in places where a helicopter rescue operation is not possible or the use of a helicopter is prevented by weather conditions. In this case, it is necessary to resort to the so-called **traditional rescuing**, where rescue units reach an injured person on foot or climbing. Traditional rescuing involves special rescue techniques: rockface rescue technique, gorge rescue technique, frozen waterfalls rescue technique, tall buildings rescue technique and tree rescue technique.

Different combinations of the above-mentioned techniques are often used.

Rescue units operate also in winter, which requires special skills in **rescuing from avalanches**. For such tasks, avalanche dog guides are of utmost importance. These are mountain rescuers, trained to work with their dogs – the most successful assistants for searching persons, buried under snow.

Very often, rescuers need to find the missing or injured person before the rescue operation can even start. **Search for missing persons** is often both hard and time consuming. In doing so, rescuers are assisted by avalanche dog guides, helicopters and GPS navigation. If search is successful, it is usually followed by one of the traditional or helicopter rescue operations.

In order to perform their mission, mountain rescuers need to undergo constant training. Besides educating and training its members, MRAS also educates new mountain rescuers, usually coming from the circles of climbers, mountain guides and other experienced mountaineers.

MRAS takes care of not only training its own members but also organises many educational activities for other mountain enthusiasts, such as days of avalanche safety, safe hiking and similar.

MRAS rescue units often assist other mountain and similar organization in their efforts to ensure the safety of participants of various events in the mountains.

Last but not least, an important mission of MRAS is information and publicity, particularly about accident sources and dangers in the mountains. On the official MRAS website **www.grzs.si**, you will find many instructions for safe trips to the mountains, together with the information on the work of Slovene mountain rescuers.

In the event of an accident in the mountains, call 112.

Text by Dominik Skumavec, Information and Analyses Commission, MRAS

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