



ICAR

REC L 0009 E

International Commission for Alpine Rescue

Commission for Avalanche Rescue

**Recommendation REC L 0009 of the Commission for Avalanche Rescue  
of September 24, 2009**

**about the**

**Use of Terms Describing the Search Phases in an Avalanche Search**

The commission for avalanche rescue of the International Commission for Alpine Rescue,

Having regard to the search phases in an avalanche search and to the terms used in describing avalanche accidents,

Whereas:

1. A clear structure of the search phases
  - improves the understanding of an efficient search
  - allows for a concise scaling within the search
  - facilitates the use of a unified set of terms for the individual search phases that is independent of the means of the search.
2. A unified nomenclature using technically correct terms
  - reduces misunderstandings and erroneous interpretation between different language groups and language regions
  - enhances the intuitive understanding for the practical activities associated with every search phase
  - links means of searching and search technology to a specific search phase
  - provides a qualitative description for the search accuracy and so eliminates false expectations concerning the accuracy of the search, in order to encourage the carrying and use of avalanche probes.

Has adopted the following recommendation:

1. Four sequential search phases shall be used. The sequence of the phases is mandatory.
2. The means of search may be different for the individual phases.
3. The naming of the five phases shall reflect the relative accuracy of the search phase and provide an intuitive understanding of the practical activity.

4. The four phases shall be

- A signal search\* no signal to receiving the first signal
- B coarse search first signal to immediate vicinity of search target  
concise definition for electronic means of search:  
first signal to the point where the amplitude of the signal in the vicinity of the search target decreases in all directions for the first time
- C fine search searching the immediate vicinity to the first use of a probe
- D pinpointing first use of a probe to first probe hit

\* Signal (defined as any clue that can gathered by the following means):

- a) Electronic
- b) Acoustic
- c) Visual
- d) Olfactory
- e) Sensory

5. For texts about avalanches, the wording from the glossary as published on the ICAR web site shall be used <http://www.ikar-cisa.org> → Glossary.

The commission for avalanche rescue of ICAR:

The president  
Hans-Juerg Etter

**Reference:**

The ICAR glossary is available at

<http://www.ikar-cisa.org/eXtraEngine3/WebObjects/eXtraEngine3.woa/wa/glossar?nickName=ikar&menuid=476&lang=en>