



Strategies and Goals of the ICAR Avalanche Rescue Commission starting 2005

Compiled October 2004

The ICAR Avalanche Rescue Commission sees the following strategies and goals as its priority:

The commission shall ...

1. ... provide a platform to exchange experience and to discuss and learn from successful and less successful incidents and missions.
Presentations shall be structured as follows:
 - Two to five keywords on the incident
 - A report of the event
 - Lessons learned
2. ... promote detailed reports by rescuers on mission, e.g. with post-mission analysis of the scope and course of the mission. Search and rescue strategies as well as emergency medical procedures can thus be improved.
3. ... provide vendors with the opportunity to display safety and rescue equipment.
4. ... provide the opportunity to present new technologies during the conference.
5. ... further promote international investigation and verification of methods (e.g. warning systems for general dangers in mountainous areas and especially for avalanche danger). ICAR can play a coordinating role and offer to moderate such meetings.
6. ... provide the possibility to present and discuss accident analyses made in individual countries. Comparisons of experiences from different countries may lead to new international insight on accident prevention and/or mountain rescue techniques.
7. ... continue to publish and disseminate recommendations on rescue methods and preventative measures, which are agreed upon internationally. There have been many previous examples from the Commission for Alpine Medicine, the Air Rescue Commission, the Terrestrial Rescue Commission, as well as the Avalanche Rescue Commission.
8. ... invite countries from overseas (e.g. Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, South America, etc.) to participate and integrate these countries. A written exchange of experiences can be a promising start – along the lines of a membership by correspondence.
9. ... continue to make every effort possible to ensure that rescue missions can be run as safely as possible for the rescuers involved. Risk management must primarily entail the safety of the rescuers. (In the last 65 years 18 mountain rescuers were killed on avalanche rescue missions).
10. ... support an improved and optimized international data collection of search and rescue missions (with positive and negative outcomes). There is a justifiable conviction, that such data will provide new insights on accident prevention and allow rescue missions to be optimized.

There was also major consensus on the following issues:

- There is often too little time to accomplish everything during the annual conference. Members are coming from distant countries (e.g. North America, Scandinavia, or Bulgaria). The suggestion was made that the Avalanche Rescue Commission meet at the location of the annual conference, but

maybe a few days earlier, if needed. This would only require one trip and would save both time and money.

- The agenda, along with the topics to be discussed, should be established well ahead of time so that the members can prepare themselves adequately
- The Avalanche Rescue Commission of ICAR is the ideal venue to consolidate the different systems, methods, and strategies used in searching for and rescuing missing or buried subjects.

The following equally important issues were brought up as well:

The members of the Avalanche Rescue Commission shall ...

- briefly introduce themselves at the beginning of each conference (who they are, where they're from, whom they are affiliated with and in which capacity as far as avalanche and rescue work goes).
- provide discussions and workshops in special interest groups using a common language, in addition to the general presentations.
- from now on use English as the common language.
- require a 2/3 majority when voting on recommendations
- allow a total of 60 minutes per presentation, which shall include 40 minutes to discuss the material and exchange experiences.
- host the conference and a workshop (for practical work) in alternate years.
- not define standards but cover more EU and UIAA topics and inform the industry.
- maintain and support the collaboration with the other commissions. The same rescuers are often also involved in terrestrial rescue and vice versa.
- develop and present more case studies.
- present training systems.
- form special interest groups which cover certain topics throughout the year and present the results at the conference. Based on this preparation, recommendations can be completed quicker.
- also discuss avalanche danger and forecasting.
- develop standard tests for avalanche transceivers in collaboration with the manufacturers.
- evaluate devices and search strategies and orient the manufacturers and the public.
- identify trends in avalanche accidents. Incorporate the findings in avalanche awareness training and prevention.
- only participate in joint presentations (with the Terrestrial Rescue Commission) if the topic is avalanche-related.

Additional comments:

Eight of the nine respondents would like to continue the collaboration with the Terrestrial Rescue Commission as is. The duration of the collaboration shall, however, be limited to mutually interesting presentations. The time saved can be used for further work within the Avalanche Rescue Commission.

Summary of responses as of October 27, 2004 /etr