

Knowledge



30

How to raise the alarm correctly: what you need to know to optimally help the rescue services.

A misplaced footing, a fall or a serious medical problem – and the situation has suddenly turned into an emergency. The expectation placed on the rescuers is clear: to provide fast, professional assistance. Just like its operational partners, Rega does its utmost to meet these expectations in the best way possible. Raising the alarm correctly and observing a few basic principles help the Rega crews in their work and contribute to the rescue mission running smoothly and thus the patient receiving swift medical attention.

The correct number to call

When it comes to whether or not to call out Rega direct, the following rule of thumb applies: if a rescue helicopter can reach the casualty faster than any other means of rescue, it is advisable to call the Rega emergency number 1414 direct. This would be the case, for example, if the patient is located in inaccessible

terrain and access by rescuers on the ground would be difficult or impossible, or would take too long. Speed is one of the main advantages offered by a helicopter, which makes it the best choice in cases where rapid and gentle transport to a central hospital is important for the treatment of the casualty – for example, in cases of suspected back injuries, cardiac arrest, stroke, amputated limbs, severe burns or difficulty in breathing. Another advantage of the Rega helicopter is that an emergency physician is always part of the crew. In the event of a fall from a great height, an accident involving multiple casualties or seriously injured or ill children, or in other cases where medical assistance is required on site, 1414 is the number to call. And don't worry: there is no such thing as a "false alarm". The emergency services in Switzerland are very closely networked. Regardless of which emergency number you call, you will always receive

professional help and if necessary be put through to the appropriate service within seconds.

How to raise the alarm

Fundamentally, we recommend raising the alarm via Rega's emergency app. The caller's coordinates are directly transmitted to the Operations Centre and subsequently straight into the cockpit of the rescue helicopter, which saves valuable time and makes it easier to locate the accident site. If you do not have a smartphone or have not installed the Rega app, you can contact Rega by calling emergency number 1414. In order for an alarm call to be successfully initiated with your mobile phone, at least a minimal connection with a mobile phone network is necessary. If you frequently travel in areas where there is no network coverage, an emergency radio could be your device of choice. You can find more information about raising the alarm

via the emergency radio channel and other means of communication on our website. If you are unable to raise the alarm via the Rega app, emergency number 1414 or emergency radio, we recommend that you change your location if possible or try calling the European emergency number 112.

Charged, warm and protected

In order to be prepared for an emergency, we advise you to charge the battery of your mobile phone before your trip and keep it warm and protected – it can save lives in an emergency. It is also useful to configure and test the Rega app in advance and then activate one of the additional features (see box). Furthermore, you should always inform relatives, friends or mountain hut wardens where you are heading and roughly how long your planned activity will take. In an emergency, the search team will then have a better idea of where to start looking.

The helicopter is preparing to land

After the alarm has been raised, it is usually not long before the rescue

helicopter can be heard approaching the accident site. You can help the crew by attracting their attention using the correct signs (see illustration). Do not be alarmed if the rescue helicopter does not land immediately. The pilot usually circles over the area to assess any potential hazards from the air and to look for a suitable landing site. The helicopter will land as close as possible to and as far away as necessary from the accident site. When it is landing, it will generate strong turbulence, so you should secure loose objects such as jackets or rucksacks. Do not approach the helicopter until the rotor has come to a standstill and always follow the instructions of the crew.

The best rescue is the one that is never needed. If, however, you do require Rega's help, we hope that these tips will help you to take calm and considered action. We wish you, dear readers, a pleasant and above all healthy summer.

Karin Hörhager

K Checklist and emergency numbers

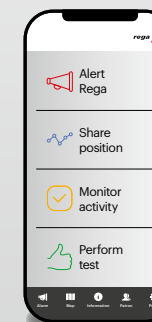
- 1 Where has the accident occurred?
- 2 Who can be contacted at the accident site and how?
- 3 What exactly happened?
- 4 How many casualties? Nature of their injuries?
- 5 What is the situation at the accident site?
- 6 What are the weather conditions at the accident site? Visibility? Rain? Wind?

Emergency numbers

| | |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 117 | Police |
| 118 | Fire services |
| 144 | Ambulance services |
| 1414 | Rega (within Switzerland) |

Raising the alarm with the Rega app

Rega's free emergency app transmits the caller's location coordinates directly to the Operations Centre. This saves valuable time in an emergency.



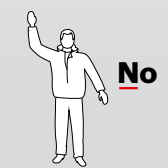
► More information on raising the alarm: www.rega.ch/raising-the-alarm

K Precautionary measures during the approach of the rescue helicopter

Hand signals to the rescue helicopter

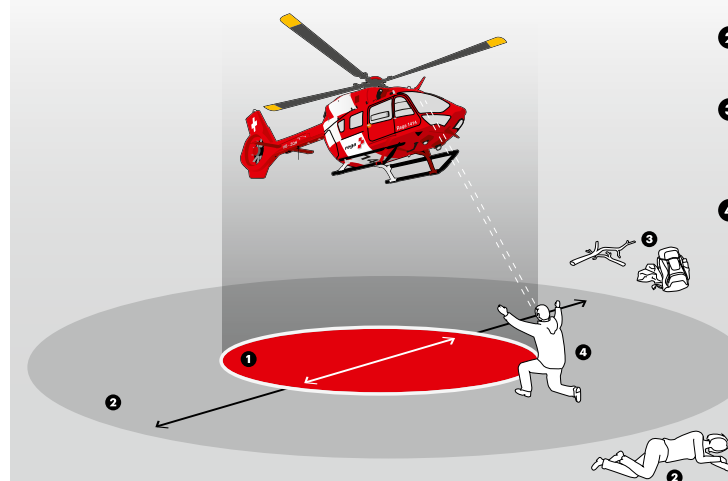


We need help



We do not need help

Suitable landing site for the rescue helicopter



- 1 Area of 25 x 25 metres, obstacle-free (no cables, power lines, etc.)
- 2 Approx. 100 metres away from the accident site
- 3 Remove any loose objects lying around (clothes, rucksacks, sun umbrellas, etc.)
- 4 How to behave at the helicopter landing site:
 - When the helicopter is approaching, stay where you are and kneel down
 - Maintain eye contact with the pilot
 - Do not approach the helicopter until the rotor has come to a standstill

31