

The search helicopter

The search for missing, injured or ill persons is one of Rega's core competences. Rega has various means at its disposal to perform search and rescue missions. For search flights, for example, a special helicopter equipped with a high-tech search system featuring a thermal imaging camera and numerous sensors is deployed. This enables Rega crews to search large areas from the air both during the day and at night.

High-tech console in the cabin

On board the search helicopter, the search specialist controls the various search systems via a console. He can operate them manually with a control stick. He analyses the camera images and the data delivered by the sensors directly on the monitors in the helicopter cabin.



IR/EOS multi-sensor search system

Key components of this high-tech system are a highly sensitive thermal imaging camera and optical sensors. These make it possible to perform searches from the air efficiently and over large areas. A powerful searchlight, which is directly connected to the system, illuminates precise areas at night. Thanks to these components, Rega's search specialists can detect people in open terrain at a distance of several kilometres. At the Wilderswil base, a Rega helicopter equipped with this system is on standby at all times.

Other Rega resources

Besides the search helicopter, Rega has other ways of searching for and rescuing a missing person. For example, a search flight by air with the rescue helicopter or the Rega drone, and on the ground with the assistance of the mountain rescuers from the Swiss Alpine Club SAC.

Mobile phone detection device

A special device is installed in the Rega search helicopter that can detect a mobile phone and narrow down its location – even if there is no mobile phone reception in the search area. This system is only used on missions carried out on behalf of the police.

Coordination of the mission

If there is good reason to believe that a person has gone missing and is in distress, the Rega flight coordinator initiates a search and rescue operation and, in consultation with the search specialist, deploys the appropriate operational resources: the nearest rescue helicopter for an initial search flight, the search helicopter with the IR/EOS multi-sensor search system, the Rega drone, or the mountain rescuers from the Swiss Alpine Club SAC. During the search mission, the Operations Centre is in constant contact with all the emergency services and partners involved.

