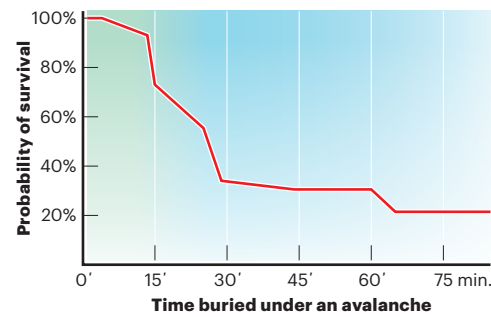


Race against time

Every winter, the Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research registers over 100 avalanche accidents in Switzerland. Around half of those who are completely buried under the snow survive – but 20 to 30 people lose their lives in an avalanche each year. A decisive factor for survival is a swift rescue: so after an avalanche, every minute counts.

The probability of survival drops within minutes



Getting caught in an avalanche is potentially fatal: 43% of people who are completely buried under the snow die directly from their injuries or from asphyxiation. Only **those who are found and extricated within a very short time have good chances of survival** (see graph left).

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① Alert Rega after an avalanche accident

Anyone who witnesses an avalanche being triggered and burying people beneath it should immediately alert Rega via the **emergency number 1414 or the Rega app**. Rega's Operations Centre will immediately mobilise all the rescue services, vehicles and equipment needed for an avalanche mission: **Rega helicopters**, which fly to the accident site to locate the buried persons and provide them with emergency medical assistance, as well as **avalanche search dog teams and mountain rescuers from the Swiss Alpine Club SAC**, who are transported to the scene by commercial helicopters.

② Companion rescue

Of crucial importance after an avalanche accident **is help by the person's companions:** avalanche victims who are swiftly located by their companions using an avalanche transceiver and dug out of the snow have the best chances of survival. Therefore: **start searching immediately after alerting Rega!** Determine where the signal is strongest, pinpoint the location of the casualty with the probe and start digging. But don't forget about your own safety.

③ Search the avalanche debris

A **time-saving search over a large area** of the avalanche – for example, if nobody saw the avalanche occur – is performed from the air using an avalanche transceiver or a Recco detector. For a more precise search, the **Rega crew** is assisted by **trained avalanche dogs** and mountain rescuers from the SAC.

④ Emergency medical care by the Rega crew

As soon as fully buried avalanche victims have been freed from the mass of snow, they often have to be **resuscitated by Rega's emergency flight physician and paramedic**. At the accident site, the Rega crew **administer first aid** to the casualties, who are often suffering from multiple injuries and hypothermia.

1414

Find out more about how Rega crews perform a search over a large area in our video at: www.avalanche.rega.ch.

► **More on this topic** can be found from page 30.

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