



International Commission for Alpine Rescue  
Report for MRA from the 2025 Air Rescue Commission

The 2025 ICAR Congress was held in Jackson, Wyoming in October. Rescuers from teams from across the world convened to share experiences and best practices and discuss solutions to common problems. **Please see the attached Commission report for the summary.**

One major theme was to share the administrative and institutional challenges faced by air rescue operations around the world. Chris Bellino from the National Park Service discussed the differing approaches used by their agency in obtaining air assets for SAR given the constraints of contracting with various government agencies. Nigel Harling from the UK outlined their system, which like the MRA involves using volunteer rescuers who interact with helicopter services which are separate from their own SAR organization. Norway shared their progress in implementing drone operations, and our own Kyle Nordfors presented a case report from Utah to highlight use cases for UAS in search, ground team support, and overwatch roles.

In the report you will also find mention of the ICAR recommendations. Each commission produces recommendations which include international consensus on specific best practices for SAR in their respective domains, and those can be found on the ICAR website. Those revisions are in process and for the Air Rescue Commission 4 were re-affirmed; 3 withdrawn; and 2 revised. Dale Wang and Julien Benet are directing this effort and in doing so are making every effort to ensure that these will be applicable to all, including the wide range of air rescue operations that exist currently in North America. The European Safety Promotion Network for Rotorcraft (ESPN-R) was established in 2017 as a multidisciplinary working group to establish best practices for helicopter operations. Their work for the European equivalent of the FAA includes hoist and sling load/short haul papers on equipment and operations which may significantly influence future ICAR recommendations.

Next there were several presentations that MRA members may find directly practical to their operations. Dave Weber did a demonstration as well as a classroom session on the various methods commonly used to address the helicopter to ground interface when doing hoist or short haul when the rescue is also connected to a ground anchor. This included a “quick clip,” releasable rope method (most commonly using a Munter/Italian hitch), a planned tensioned cut of the tether with a hook knife, and the Petzl Lezard. The common theme is that the right solution for your team depends on many factors including but not limited to your common mission profiles, finances, and frequency of use. But all methods regardless of complexity require training. Clayton Horney and Laura McGladrey outlined how the National Guard Army Aviation unit in Colorado initiated a stress injury screening and monitoring system; and how the important thing is to try to start something and not wait for perfection to start the process.

Also of note is that in the past the accident reporting section typically was focused more on mishaps which had resulted in fatalities or injuries. This year we presented three “near miss” incidents, including entanglement of a paraglider chute in a river with the rescuer connected to the aircraft, cable damage during a hoist rescue, and an engine failure that occurred while training.

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