



Summary of the Avalanche Commission's Work at the 2025 ICAR Congress – Jackson, Wyoming

The following is a summary of the Avalanche Commission's work at the 2025 ICAR Congress held in Jackson, Wyoming. It was exciting to have our international rescue colleagues in the United States. From their stories and smiles, it was clear that they took advantage of the time before the congress to explore the unique surroundings of the Tetons and Yellowstone. Teton County Search and Rescue did a fabulous job hosting, and the Jackson community warmly welcomed everyone with great food and local cultural events. Despite cool autumn mornings, our days were filled with warm sunshine and dry conditions. It was wonderful to reconnect with friends and prepare for the work ahead.

Day 2 – Practical Sessions at Jackson Hole Ski Resort

Day 2, as always, was the practical day located at Jackson Hole Ski Resort. After a short tram ride to breakfast and hot coffee, we began the practical sessions. The Avalanche Commission presented two practical sessions. Dr. Scott MacIntosh, Mike Koppang, and other U.S.-based SAR members led an excellent hands-on session on hypothermia packaging and treatment. Participants learned about different types of hypothermia packaging and became familiar with various extrication methods from snowy environments. Demonstrations included intermittent CPR and CPR in a ski litter. The goal was to raise awareness among rescuers that pre-planning is vital during hypothermia emergencies.

Multiple transceiver manufacturers were present. Small groups rotated through each manufacturer's station to learn about new developments and how to troubleshoot search issues. EMI (electromagnetic interference) remains a concern for rescuers, and all teams should remain aware of this. Below is a list of the manufacturers and sponsors who were present.

- ARVA
- PIEPS
- Mammut Barryvox S2
- Ortovox
- Nivia 3D

Days 3-5 Indoor Sessions

On Day 3, the indoor sessions began. Each ICAR member presented a national accident and snowpack summary. All the summaries were excellent and full of interesting information. The following are highlights that we believe are of particular importance to the MRA membership.



Overall, it appears that a lower or thinner snowpack across most European countries kept the number of fatalities at average or slightly lower levels. This also resulted in fewer machine-related accidents than in previous years. Another trend to note is the global rise in multiple burials.

A3's Jen Reddy shared U.S. statistics reflecting this global trend. In the U.S., incidents involving entire parties are on the rise: 70% of incidents involved full parties, 37% of deep burials were over 2 meters, and 26% of accidents involved individuals without transceivers. Globally, more incidents are involving the ice climbing and mountaineering community, groups that often do not wear transceivers. Examples shared across the ICAR membership reinforced that EMI and other signal interferences can significantly impact rescue effectiveness.

International Case Studies

Norway and Canada presented two case studies involving complex and high-risk avalanche terrain. The Norwegian team described a seashore avalanche rescue of a person found without a transceiver after seven hours of burial. The victim was able to phone from within the snowpack and was located through a multifaceted search using K9, RECCO, and probing techniques. Remarkably, his core temperature was only 91°F after seven hours of burial.

Squamish rescuers in Canada shared a 38-day recovery operation involving three subjects without transceivers. This mission required multiple rescue and recovery techniques to ensure safety. The takeaway message from both examples was clear: rescuers must be familiar with and train in all available rescue methods.

Avalanche Commission Recommendations

During this congress, the Avalanche Commission finalized editing on two avalanche recommendations that have been in progress since 2024 in Greece. Once internally approved, the recommendations were presented to and passed by the Assembly of Delegates.

- *Avalanche Rescue Commission: Phases in an Avalanche Search – Recommendation 009 (2008, Updated 2025)*
<https://www.alpine-rescue.org/articles/1681--phases-in-an-avalanche-search-recommendation-009-2008-updated-2025>
- *Avalanche Rescue Commission: Organized Avalanche Rescue Probing Strategies – Recommendation 0011 (Original 2015, Updated 2025)*
<https://www.alpine-rescue.org/articles/1682--organized-avalanche-rescue-probing-strategies-2015-updated-2025>

Looking ahead, the Avalanche Commission workgroups are exploring the development of an ICAR best-practice database or “practice repository.” Future recommendations will address transceiver search and shoveling techniques.

Lectures and Research Highlights



MRA ICAR Avalanche Commission Report



This year's lectures spanned all disciplines of avalanche rescue—equipment, medicine, and prevention—and were filled with valuable and thought-provoking information.

Dr. Allison Sheets gave an update and retrospective look at avalanche fatalities, revisiting her past research and current data on fatality determination. Asphyxia remains the leading cause of death; however, trauma continues to be a major consideration for rescuers providing care.

Italian researcher and rescuer Dr. Giacomo Strapazzon (CNSAS) presented his lecture, *Efficacy and Pathophysiological Implications of a New Asphyxiation Delaying Device – SAFEBACK*, to a full auditorium. His eagerly awaited data demonstrated that an airflow device could delay the onset of hypoxemia during burial.

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/2839664>

Commission Elections

The 2025 congress also included elections for a new Avalanche Commission president. Incumbent president Stephanie Thomas was on the ballot, and a Swedish team nominated Manuel Genswein as a candidate. Each candidate presented their vision for the commission and responded to questions. After an open discussion, Stephanie Thomas was re-elected for a second term.

Closing Remarks

The 2025 Avalanche Commission congress was a great success thanks to the hard work of all its members. Their dedication to providing high-quality content and fostering collaboration was evident throughout the event. Special recognition is due to vice presidents Mike Koppang (Canada) and Claudio Artoni (Italy) for their outstanding coordination in making this year's event a success. The commission's leadership has built a strong collaborative atmosphere across all ICAR commissions—an achievement that will continue to enhance rescuer safety and improve rescue outcomes worldwide.

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Heiko Stopsack

Hood River Crag Rats - Mountain Rescue- Team Member

Mountain Rescue Association Delegate to the International Commission on Alpine Rescue

King County Medic One/ King County Sheriff Air Support Unit -Paramedic / Rescue Specialist

Professional Member of the American Avalanche Association

stopheiko@gmail.com

253-569-2630

Stephanie Jones

Salt Lake County Search and Rescue

Jones.sej@gmail.com

3019080494