



NEWS RELEASE

June 19, 2016

SARA: SARA position on charging for rescue services

Three separate heat-related rescues in Tucson today again have evoked the conversation regarding charging for search and rescue. The Southern Arizona Rescue Association is a member team of the Mountain Rescue Association and shares [that organization's position on charging for rescue](#), be it as a "stupid hiker law" or in any other form:

"The Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) with over 90 teams from the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom -- most of which are comprised of expert unpaid professional members -- work through or for a local government search and rescue authority. In an effort to give back to the community, defray public agencies' costs and keep taxes down, the MRA teams have been performing the bulk of all search and rescue operations for the past 48 years and those were done without charge to the victim....

...no one should ever be made to feel they must delay in notifying the proper authorities of a search or rescue incident out of fear of possible charges. The expert volunteer teams of MRA are proud to be able to provide search and rescue at NO cost and have NO plans to charge in the future."

The full MRA position statement on charging for rescue is available here:

<http://www.mra.org/images/stories/docs/MRAChargePosition.pdf>

SARA has been called to assist Pima County Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue unit with three separate heat-related incidents today, at Finger Rock Trail, Sabino Canyon, and Ventana Canyon. There has been at least one hiker fatality.

Nearly 30 SARA and Southern Arizona Mounted Search and Rescue (SAMSAR) volunteers have responded to these missions. Volunteers have rushed from one call to the next, sometimes running the trails with heavy packs themselves to bring water, shade, and medical attention to hikers in need.

Delaying calling 911 out of fear of a charge for rescue could have resulted in more fatalities today, if individuals in need avoided calling for aid until their condition became severe. Delaying calling for rescue also results in greater struggle and serious risk to our volunteer emergency first responders. SARA encourages anyone in need of assistance to call for help immediately, before their condition becomes serious or life-threatening.

Excessive heat such as Tucson currently is experiencing can be life-threatening. SARA urges everyone to stay indoors between 10AM and dusk. Anyone who ventures outdoors should take plenty of water and electrolyte fluids such as Gatorade, rest in the shade, and always turn around when half their water is gone, if not sooner.

Please contact the Pima County Sheriff's Department PIO for more information regarding today's rescue incidents: [520-237-3740](tel:520-237-3740).

The Southern Arizona Rescue Association is an all-volunteer, non-profit search and rescue organization serving southern Arizona and Pima County since 1958. SARA members are volunteers from all walks of life, donating their time, skills and enthusiasm to provide a vital service to the public. Visit www.sarci.org/sara.

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