

Costs rescue operations in Europe

Summary of responses from 29 European Consumer Centres

	How likely is it that a tourist ends up paying to be rescued from a hazardous situation while visiting your country?	If it can happen, under what circumstances will the consumer receive an invoice?	How much can it cost to be rescued from a dangerous situation at sea?	How much can it cost to be rescued from a dangerous situation in the mountain?	How much can it cost to be rescued from a dangerous situation in the forest?
ECC France	The general principle (since 1733) says that rescue services in the mountains and sea in France are free of charge.	<p><u>Derogation</u> : Article 54 « de la loi sur la démocratie de proximité » dated 27 February 2002: The commune/community can bill the rescue consequent to a leisure or sports activity. (until 1985: this exception was exclusively limited to alpine or cross-country skiing).</p> <p>Circumstances: if the community had to cover extensive rescue costs even though the metrological conditions weren't good and the risk high.</p>	Since Brussels convention from 1910, no remuneration needs to be paid by persons whose life has been saved. (different if we talk about the rescue of objects/items/values)	<p>RARE: The community can ask for a reimbursement of the rescue costs in the skiing area, on the flagged ski slope or outside the piste. Out of the skiing area, the state rescue teams are in charge and this is then free of charge.</p> <p>The community will fix the remuneration according to the rescue measures (helicopter; etc...)</p>	The community will fix the remuneration according to the rescue measures (helicopter; etc...) Ex : voluntary forest fire

ECC Austria	Very likely. http://www.europakonsument.at/cs/Satellite?pagename=Europakonsument/MagazinArtikel/Detail&cid=318858409870	He will always receive an invoice. Therefore we advise consumers before they go on holidays in the mountains to conclude an insurance that covers rescues from hazardous situations. Furthermore if an accident happened in the mountains with severe injuries the health insurance system will cover a lump sum up to approximately 800 € depending of the severeness of the injury.	Austria is landlocked country and has no sea	Several thousand Euro (helicopter rescues around 4000 to 8000 Euro).	Don't know.
ECC Denmark	Søværnets Operative Kommando (http://forsvaret.dk/sok/Pages/default.aspx)				
ECC Cyprus	In the case that a tourist has to be rescued from a hazardous situation while visiting Cyprus he will not have to pay anything. In Cyprus, in all situations of rescuing a tourist the competent government departments i.e. police, fire brigade, civil defence will take care of the situation free of charge.	Under no circumstances the consumer will receive an invoice when rescued by government departments.	No cost	No cost	No cost
ECC Bulgaria	Very likely. If the consumer does not have a mountain insurance covering the expenses for rescuing, then the consumer\ has to pay for the rescue services. The payment has to be made after	After making the payment the consumer receives an invoice.	The sea rescuing for people is organized through the structures of the Executive Agency Maritime Administration \EAMA\. It is not paid. EAMA is not in a position	The official authorized service for rescuing people in the mountain is the Mountain Rescue Services \MRS\. The mountain insurance	Bulgaria is a mountainous country and all big forests are in the mountains. We do not have big forests outside the mountains and accidents in forests in these areas usually do not

	the rescue operation.		to rescue ships, boats and other possessions, for which the owners have to pay a subscription to insurance or security companies. These companies have the responsibility, in a case of accident, to take care of the material possessions.	is covering the expenses needed for rescuing. In case a person is not insured he/she has to pay according to the price list, described in Table 1	happen. If such accidents happen there \outside the mountains\, then the National Service of Civil Protection or the Police have to take rescue actions, which are not paid. But it is most common that the forest accidents happen in the mountains and then the Table 1 insurance coverage/price list applies.
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Table 1.

No	Types of Rescuing of the Mountain Rescue Services	Price EUR
1	Accident in the mountain	285
2	Accident in the ski slopes	200
3	Searching actions	370
4	...more than 24 hours	20/hour
5	Avalanche accident actions	490
6	...more than 48 hours	20/hour
7	Transportation of injured people with specialized rescuing facilities of the Mountain Rescue Services \MRS\	80
8	Transportation of a body	140
9	Order for searching	45
10	First medical aid in a rescue post or MRS base	15

	How likely is it that a tourist ends up paying to be rescued from a hazardous situation while visiting your country?	If it can happen, under what circumstances will the consumer receive an invoice?	How much can it cost to be rescued from a dangerous situation at sea?	How much can it cost to be rescued from a dangerous situation in the mountain?	How much can it cost to be rescued from a dangerous situation in the forest?
ECC Belgium	<p>It is not likely, but it is not excluded. This depends on the rescue team, why the person came into a hazardous situation and if a judge decides that the costs of the rescue will be charged to him.</p> <p>We are not aware of a case where the costs were charged to the rescued persons.</p>	<p>According to what I found in newspapers, there must be a claim from the institution who rescued the tourist and the judge must order to pay the costs.</p> <p>It is difficult though to give a straight answer, as situations can be very different and your insurance can cover or not some of the rescue activities. I found an article in a newspaper where they said that "it is not right that it is always the Belgian taxpayer who has to pay for rescues from reckless tourists", from which I might deduct those tourists normally, are not charged. Of course, when you were acting recklessly or breaching the security rules, a judge could decide that you will have to reimburse the costs.</p>	<p>There was a case of two French young men going fishing at night with a lot of beer. They needed to be rescued with a Sea King helicopter and this rescue was estimated to cost 14245 euro.</p> <p>Interventions of beach guards are free of costs for the tourists.</p> <p>Intervention of coast guard are free when it is to rescue people, but not if it is to rescue material (like boats)</p>	<p>We have no mountains in Belgium</p>	<p>We don't really have big forests in Belgium, but one could be lost in a forest or have an accident. But then the rescue would not be charged.</p>
ECC Ireland	<p>In Ireland local authorities run the accident and emergency services. In Dublin, Dublin</p>	<p>Under the said acts local authorities have the power to impose charges at their discretion. For instance, recently</p>	<p>There is no charge for the cost of a call out of the Coastguard which is</p>	<p>Mountain rescue services are staffed by volunteers and</p>	<p>Ireland is not a heavily forested country so it is unlikely that such a</p>

	<p>Fire Brigade which provides fire and ambulance services, does not charge for call outs, only in the case of fire call outs to commercial premises.</p> <p>Outside of Dublin local authorities have the power to impose charges for emergency services under the Local Government Act 2001 and the Fire Services Act 1981.</p>	<p>a householder whose house was cut off by snow was charged €1,500 by Laois County Council for the cost of emergency services coming to clear access to his house.</p>	<p>responsible for emergency rescues at sea.</p>	<p>do not charge for their services. They receive funding from the Government for the service they provide.</p>	<p>situation would arise. However, in the context of being lost in a forest, as in the case of being lost on a mountain, local mountain rescue services are called. These are run on a voluntary basis and do not charge for their services.</p>
ECC Portugal	<p>In Portugal it is understood that protection of human life is priceless.</p> <p>So all the rescue efforts are free.</p>	<p>Only if the situation is due to consumer's negligence.</p> <p>And in this case, the price depends on the means used.</p>	<p>There is no price</p>	<p>There is no price</p>	<p>There is no price</p>
ECC Netherlands	<p>It depends if the consumer has insurance. In NL almost everything is paid by the insurance. If your insurance policy does not cover it, you have to pay for the bill yourself.</p>	<p>Mostly the consumer will receive an invoice send to his/her home address. They have to pay and claim the money back with their own insurance company.</p>	<p>According to our Royal Dutch Safeguard company (Koninklijke Nederlandse Redding Maatschappij - KNRM) the costs to be rescued in our Dutch waters is free. The costs will be covered by voluntary contribution. The crew exists of well trained volunteers.</p>	<p>Not relevant as NL does not have any mountains.</p>	<p>Not relevant as this rescue would fall under the jurisdiction of the same companies as the rescues from question 1.</p>
ECC Romania	<p>It will not happen. The rules on the mountain and sea rescue services do not cover</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>	<p>Not applicable. No information.</p>	<p>Not applicable. No information.</p>	<p>Not applicable. No information.</p>

	<p>a situation like this.</p> <p>Theoretically, a person could be brought to justice, in a civil action (civil liability), in order to be obliged to cover a loss which appeared due to his fault (for example if he has ignored the instructions and danger signs). Until now we do not know of such action ever been brought to justice.</p>				
ECC Lithuania	<p>We have made an investigation and we found out that State Border Guard Service and Military of Lithuania has helicopters that would be used in a case of emergency for civilian's evacuation.</p> <p>We also find out that in such situations the civilians should not get any invoices (does not matter whether they are Lithuanians or not) because it is extreme situation were civilians life should be secured.</p>				
ECC Finland	<p>Life rescues services are free of charge based on law.</p> <p>A difference is made between human lives and equipment.</p>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

	Should a storm require rescue, the sea travellers would be rescued free of charge but the salvage-activity (e.g. the boat) would only take place on the expense of the owner. (source: The Finnish Lifeboat Institution)				
ECC Germany	Depends on their own health insurance terms and whether those costs are taken over by their health insurance; for Germans, necessary emergency rescue in accordance with Sozialgesetzbuch V (Social Security Code V) is covered by health insurance. In general, ever question can be answered “depending on incident (eg negligence) and health insurance coverage”.	ECC Germany received a case where consumer suffered heart attack in Austria, was taken to hospital and hospital in Austria decided that better treatment would be granted in Germany; consumer was taken to German hospital via helicopter and German health insurance denied to take over costs for helicopter transport; in the end costs were taken over by health insurance. However, since every case appears to be different, likeliness of receiving an invoice is hard to tell.	Staff of Deutsche Gesellschaft zur Rettung Schiffbrüchiger: voluntarily or employed; financed via donations only Rescue might be covered by health insurance (always depending on necessity)	Depends in type of incident and health insurance coverage Bavaria: Mountain rescuers work voluntary Emergency service: 185 – 740 EUR (allowance) reimbursable by health insurance Special services : 185 – 740 EUR (allowance) not reimbursable; Limit for costs per 24 hours: 2500 EUR Cross-border: depends on health insurance of citizen In case of necessary movement of sick person costs are	Emergency Medical Services law (for each Province of the Federal State); if it is an emergency and necessary transport will be covered by German Health insurance (foreigners subject to their own health insurance terms)

				covered by health insurance	
ECC UK	<p>http://www.mountain.rescue.org.uk/</p> <p>According to this website, it's free to casualties.</p> <p>This information are taken from an Internet search engine as we did not come across to any of the organisation involved in these types of activities.</p>	N/A	<p>http://www.rnli.org.uk/</p> <p>Charity, 24hour service It seems at no cost</p>	<p>http://www.mountain.rescue.org.uk/</p> <p>http://www.mrcofs.org/</p> <p>It seems at no cost</p>	/
ECC Estonia	This will not going to happen in Estonia, as rescue works are free of charge for all people no matter from which country.	-	No costs.	No costs.	No costs.
ECC Latvia	If tourist call to the State Fire-fighting and Rescue Service then he will be rescued free of charge and there is no difference if he is Latvian or foreign citizen. The only situation when person is forced to pay may be in case if there had been malicious call, in order to "make fun".	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Due to geographical circumstances, in Latvian mountains there hadn't been ever such situations when person was rescued by helicopter. Nevertheless person will always	Not applicable.

				get the first help in case of problems free of charge.	
ECC Slovakia	Foreign tourists in SK in case they need to use the help of rescue squad in the mountains and they concluded in their country such insurance, by the rescue operation they receive the invoice from the rescue agency, which they have to submit to the insurance office at home. Foreign tourists can pay their insurance also in SK directly and in most cases also in the hotels. Short time insurance in the mountains is from 0, 33 €/day/person. For the whole year it is from 12, 95€ /day/ person, the insurance coverage is approx. 10 000 €. Also when you buy a ski pass, the insurance is included in the ticket when skiing. But if you ski or make other tours in restricted areas or behind the safe marked zones, you have to pay for the rescue operation.	In Slovakia in case that the tourist has to be rescued he will receive in any case an invoice which can be paid by bank transfer or in cash by the cash desk of the Rescue agency (Horská záchranná služba).	-	By using the helicopter in the mountain the amount is from 2000 – 10 000 EUR or up to 20 000 EUR.	From 50 – 3000 EUR.
ECC Spain	We have contacted with Civil Guard and have found an	Spain is composed of 17 autonomous communities which have their own			

	<p>article about legislation in this field. It is not likely that a tourist ends paying to be rescued while visiting Spain.</p> <p>We do not have official prices about rescues at sea, mountain or forest, because it depends on each particular situation.</p>	<p>legislation and for this reason it is possible to find differences between each of them.</p> <p>At the moment the legislation of only two autonomous communities (Cataluña and Cantabria) determines that the tourists have to pay to be rescued when they fall into negligence. For example if the person do not respect prohibition and safety signs. But there are a low percentage of rescues due to reckless actions.</p> <p>We can detail some prices related to the rescue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using Civil Protection helicopters: 1.639,00€ per hour. - Six hours of Spelunking team assistance: 500,00€ - Making up a rescue/search team: 100€ <p>In other communities, the rescue service is offered without any cost. However the authorities of other communities have a clear intention to follow the Cataluña and Cantabria´s cases.</p>			
ECC Poland	In Poland there are various organizations engaged in rescuing people, depending	In case of water rescue services, when the rescue service concerns equipment and not lifesaving.	Water (lake and sea) lifesaving rescue services in Poland are free of	Mountain rescue services in Poland are free of charge.	There are no rescue services concerning forests in Poland.

	<p>on where such a service is needed.</p> <p>Mountain rescue is decentralized and led by local rescue organizations (either united in GOPR – Mountain Voluntary Rescue Service or TOPR – Tartan Voluntary Rescue Service). Rescue services of these organizations are free of charge, even if the tourist called for help in a situation, where it was obviously unnecessary.</p> <p>Water (lake and sea) rescue services are done by a centralized organization called WOPR – Water Voluntary Rescue Service. These services are free of charge when the service concerns lifesaving. In case of rescuing of equipment (specifically – yacht hauling), the service is always charged for.</p>		<p>charge.</p> <p>Equipment saving (yacht hauling) services are charged approximately 300 PLN (c.a. 75 EUR) per hour of hauling.</p>		<p>A person lost in a forest in Poland would have to call the police. A rescue service would be most likely conducted by the police with cooperation with Forest Security or Forest Care. We do not possess information on whether such interventions would be charged for.</p>
<p>ECC Italy</p>	<p>In Italy the legal framework can be different from region to region. Some special statutes regions issued legal acts which foreseen the citizens to be charged with rescue costs if the emergency call is totally unfounded or a rescue by</p>	<p>As told before: - if the emergency call is totally unfounded - if a rescue by helicopter is disproportionate to the risk - as for ambulance, there are some private ambulances but when you call the national numbers the public health services doesn't apply fees.</p>	<p>The "Coast Guard" is the national body dealing with people rescue in the sea. Fees are never charged.</p>	<p>The Alpine Rescue can charge some fees, as explained. The costs can vary depending on the means of transport, the crew, the equipment, medical surgeries etc.</p>	<p>The "Forest National Body" never charges fees for the rescue.</p>

	<p>helicopter is disproportionate to the run risk.</p> <p>Valle D'Aosta stated that a rescue for foreigner citizens is always for a fee: the citizen can then try and make his own health insurance or the national health system covers the expenses.</p>				
ECC Hungary	<p>The competent department of the Hungarian Police informed that rescue actions in Hungary are free of charge – that is, if one gets lost in the woods or mountains, or if someone goes bathing to a river or lake.</p> <p>Life-saving operations and the search itself is organized by the police and the costs shall not be charged on the person whose life got saved.</p>	<p>In the event however, that a hazardous situation is the result of one's actionable conduct, than the costs are charged on the person (if, for example one climbs up to the television tower and has to be rescued, he has to cover costs of the rescue action). The police officer could unfortunately not give me exact numbers, as the costs always depend on the actions that need to be carried out; the sum can range between a few thousand Euros to ten-thousands of Euros.</p>			
ECC Iceland	<p>Not likely – tourists that get lost in the wilderness, upon glaciers, mountains, on sea etc. do not have to pay when being rescued by the rescue squads or helicopters.</p> <p>Travellers being rescued by the coast guard or rescue squads by jeeps, helicopters etc. are not charged.</p>	<p>This has been criticized somewhat as in many cases said travellers are very ill-equipped and have no idea where they are and have no CPS-gadgets etc.</p> <p>However, you have to pay for an ambulance (both when going to hospital by car and plane) but it is very seldom that travellers need such</p>			

		services.			
ECC Czech Republic	Not exact statistics.	Rescuing from hazardous situation for Czech citizens is usually for free. It is covered from the state budget. A foreigner would pay for any rescue help of the Mountain Rescue CZ (unless he has insurance for it)	Not applicable (we don't have a sea).	It depends (please see attachment).	It depends (please see attachment).
ECC Greece	This will not happen in Greece, as rescue works are free of charge for all people no matter from which country.	-	No costs.	No costs.	No costs.
ECC Malta	<p>Rescue services in Malta are provided either by the Civil Protection Departments or the Armed Forces of Malta</p> <p>The Civil Protection Department does not charge for fire-fighting and rescue operations. The only charges raised are connected to extra duties (e.g. Providing service for fire cover in non-emergency events, like concerts, parties, etc).</p> <p>The AFM (Armed Forces of Malta) does not charge for Search and Rescue (SAR) Service.</p>		<p>The AFM (Armed Forces of Malta) does not charge for Search and Rescue (SAR) Service.</p> <p>The only charges that may be raised are for services rendered when the same service could have been done by commercial providers. This normally is for towing service when boats have engine problems but the case is not a SAR Case.</p>	No mountains in Malta	No forests in Malta
ECC Slovenia	As far as I know it will not happen. The legislation on rescue services does not cover this situation. The costs				

	<p>are not paid by the consumers.</p> <p>In the future there will be some changes in the legislation because there are more and more situations when people have to be rescued from a hazardous situation (esp. from mountains) and the expenses are higher and higher.</p>				
ECC Sweden	<p>Life rescues services are free of charge based on law.</p> <p>The Law on the Prevention of Accidents, chapter 4. Lagen om skydd mot olyckor (SOU 2002:10 4 kap.)</p>	<p>A difference is made between human lives and equipment.</p> <p>Cost of search and rescue - When the incident commander assesses the case as a rescue, there is no charge for the operation.</p> <p>Help that is not search and rescue under the Act are paid by the person who needs help or by insurance.</p>	-	-	-
ECC Luxemburg	<p>ECC Luxemburg contacted the "Administration des services de secours" that is in charge of the 112 telephone number in Luxemburg. This Administration informed us that it is not likely that a consumer ends up paying when he had to be rescued from a hazardous situation. Rescue operations in case of</p>	-	-	-	-

	emergency are free of charge.				
ECC Norway	ECC is waiting for an answer from the responsible authority.				