

SAR SUBJECTS TO BE BILLED?

**Fees can create delays
that can increase risks.**

Jason Robertson - American Whitewater

**Each remembered hearing, seeing or reading,
somewhere that SAR cost thousands of dollars
which they could not afford.**

Kurt Repanshek - National Parks Traveler

**If the specter of financial reimbursement hung over the decision to report
distress, we could get fewer calls, or calls during later stages of emergencies, and
more people would die at sea. This factor alone outweighs any consideration of
how much money we might recoup**

U.S.C.G. Commandant James Loy

**A delay can place SAR personnel
in danger and can unnecessarily
compound and lengthen a SAR
mission.**

*Kurt Repanshek - National Parks
Traveler*

**Not calling for emergency SAR help could
be as catastrophic as not calling the fire
department because the home owner's first
thought was, 'How in the world will I pay
the fire department?'**

Dan Hourihan, President - National Association for SAR

COST RECOVERY IN SAR

Should rescued individuals pay their search and rescue costs?

Under what circumstances is this appropriate?

Will there be a reduction in SAR incidents?

What consequences, intended and unintended could this have?



360° approach – dimensions of debate

Operational (how will it affect SAR response)

Social (how will it reduce SAR incidents)

Financial

Administrative

Political/Public will

Legal

DEFINITIONS - for the purpose of this plenary...

SAR COSTS – direct operational costs (not infrastructure – the maintenance, training, equipment and availability of a SAR response)

COST RECOVERY

direct operational costs sought from the individual(s) rescued

PROVISION OF SERVICE

direct operational costs incurred in supporting other States, Departments, levels of government or organizations

INSURANCE

personal/SAR bonds

group – for example SPOT insurance addendum

industry – for example commercial operators,

NEGLIGENCE and RISK

HIGH COST RESCUES

\$300,000 – Abby Sunderland



Photo © Wikipedia

\$5.8M for two rescues
within two years



Photo © Lionel Daudet

Air crash in Southern BC
in 2010 – 4.8M

Snowmobiler in
Nunavut \$100,000

Boulder Mountain Avalanche 2010

200 participants, 30 injured, 2 fatalities
Cost of rescue/recovery: Over 1M



ABBY SUNDERLAND

- **Australia and France could pay up to \$300,000 for costs to rescue Abby Sunderland.**
- **The U.S. Sailing Association refused to sponsor Sunderland's bid, considering it too dangerous.**
- **She did not have insurance for her trip, and her mother has said there is no way the family could pay the rescuers even if asked.**

[Video](#)

What drives examining cost recovery?

Media attention

Public expectation and perception

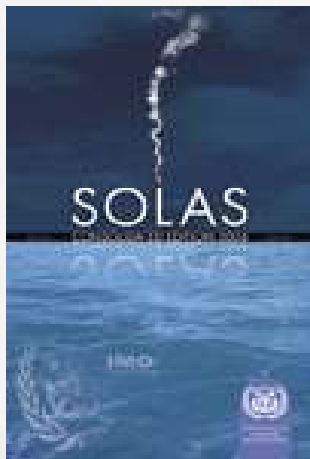
Government expenditure review

Sustainability of infrastructure

Liability concerns

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

International conventions specify States' responsibility relating to aeronautical and maritime SAR



Provision of SAR services/Member Agreements
Nothing in these conventions prohibits member states from charging however it is not customary

The debate around the world

 Australian Senator plans on introducing a Bill to Parliament which would see adventurers forced to use the profits from media deals to pay back their Australian rescuers.

 A law was passed in July 2010 that the government could ask to be reimbursed for costs incurred for SAR operations abroad if people knew of the risks.


In many European countries, mountain climbers must purchase rescue insurance before receiving a climbing permit and within Europe, cost recovery for mountain rescue is common


 In Aconcagua Park no-one is charged for a rescue.

“...But we are now considering insisting climbers take out insurance to help us recover our SAR costs. Providing an adequate SAR operation is expensive, and the park does not have the money for that...” *Guillermo Carmon, Mendoza State Secretary of the Environment*

UNITED STATES

 **Four states - New Hampshire, Hawaii, Oregon and Maine - have laws allowing agencies to bill for rescues.**

 **California, Vermont, Colorado and Idaho have laws allowing state agencies to bill in limited circumstances, but the laws are rarely enforced.**

 **National SAR organizations dislike the laws. They worry the possibility of big bills could cause hikers to delay calling for help, putting them and rescuers at greater risk.**

Rescued hiker billed
\$25,735



Photo AP @Oct 30 2009 Washington Times

CANADA

In the Air / On the Sea

- 🇨🇦 The Canadian Forces and Canadian Coast Guard do not normally recover costs for SAR even though there are provisions for doing so.

In National Parks

- 🇨🇦 Visitors in northern national parks are required to register overnight trips with the park office, including details about their party and the planned route. Visitors who fail to register or de-register and who fail to take responsibility for their actions may be charged.

In Canada's North

The Nunavut Emergency Measures Act states that:

A person may be required to reimburse the costs incurred in the course of a SAR operation that resulted from conduct or omission on the part of the person that was imprudent, unreasonable or negligent.

In Ski Resorts

Canada West Ski Areas Association does not have a written policy on cost recovery. However, when individuals act in an irresponsible way and disregard warning signs, placing themselves in a dangerous situation in an uncontrolled area, which leads to ski patrollers and SAR personnel having to risk their lives in order to rescue the, then many of our operators would favour the recovery costs being levied against the individual(s) concerned.

Considerations

Would charging fees lead to a false sense of security and more risk-taking?

Would liability in providing (or not) a SAR response increase?

Will technology help or hinder – nuisance calls/false alerts?

Will subjects be less likely to call in due time or endanger friends/family before asking for “official” help

Will the administrative function be cost effective?

Will it support SAR infrastructure?

For discussion

Cost Recovery

Opt-In Insurance

Broad Taxation