



## The Dynamics of a Search and Rescue Operation

*Volunteers are key to the successful efforts of New Hampshire Fish and Game Department and White Mountain National Forest*

White Mountains, NH — While one of the main goals of the hikeSafe program is to reduce the number of rescues necessary in the White Mountain National Forest and surrounding wildlife areas in New Hampshire, accidents do happen. In these unfortunate situations, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department and White Mountain National Forest, along with local volunteer associations, are always prepared to conduct rescues. However, with the implementation of hikeSafe, hikers will be better prepared to conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner on the trail, making rescue situations less frequent.

In search and rescue scenarios, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department is the lead agency and is in charge of coordinating the rescue efforts. Typically, search and rescue crews are made up of New Hampshire Fish and Game Department conservation officers and volunteers who venture into the backcountry in order to find lost and injured hikers. Many times they are putting themselves at personal risk in order to find someone who has perhaps used poor judgment and stumbled into a dangerous situation, especially when there is a severe weather situation. hikeSafe hopes to reduce the amount of times these search and rescue professionals are putting themselves at risk.

Hikers should also know that if they need to be rescued as a result of their irresponsible actions, they can be charged for the cost of the event, which averages \$3,000 per rescue. Annually, New Hampshire spends \$130,000 on rescues, but with hikeSafe, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department is looking to substantially lower that number through hiker education and the Hiker Responsibility Code. The most effective way to increase the safety of hikers in the White Mountains is through knowledge of the outdoors and respect for the environment you are in, and hikeSafe was developed to foster both knowledge and respect for the White Mountains and all of New Hampshire's backcountry.

- Androscoggin Valley Search and Rescue
- Appalachian Mountain Club
- Mount Washington Auto Road
- Mount Washington Observatory
- Mountain Rescue Service
- New England K9 Search and Rescue
- New Hampshire Air National Guard— SAR Volunteers
- New Hampshire Outdoor Council
- Randolph Mountain Club
- Stonehearth Open Learning Opportunities Wilderness Emergency Medicine (SOLO)
- Upper Valley Wilderness Response Team
- New Hampshire Army National Guard
- New Hampshire Division of Parks and Recreation

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[www.hikesafe.com](http://www.hikesafe.com)

hikeSafe was developed and is endorsed by the White Mountain National Forest and New Hampshire Fish and Game