



## 7 Safety Tips from the Mountain Rescue Service

### 1) Accurate self-assessment

Before setting off on a hike in the mountains, always take stock of your **physical condition** and your **skill set**. Honestly assess your own capabilities and also those of your companions – particularly if they are children. **The length and degree of difficulty of your hike should be based on this assessment.** It is better to train before, not during, a hike! Fatigue, exhaustion and overexertion are the most common causes of accidents.

### 2) Adequate preparation

Using sources such as maps, guidebooks, weather channels, trip reports available through the Internet etc., **collect as much information about your proposed hike as you can.** As a general rule, stay on the route you planned. **Continually monitor your surroundings** and adapt your behaviour accordingly. Make sure to leave the details of your hike, including at **what time (at the latest) you expect to return**, with **a family member**, the proprietor at your hotel or hostel, or another third party. Getting lost frequently leads to laborious and protracted search and rescue missions.

### 3) Appropriate Gear

Assemble the requisite gear according to the **length, type and degree of difficulty of your hike.** Adapt your packing list to the season, but always include **orientation devices** and **emergency supplies** such as a first aid kit, mobile phone with a fully charged battery, acoustic/optical signalling devices, rain protection and a flashlight. Even in the summer months, hypothermia can result in a loss of performance and total exhaustion.



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### 4) Pace yourself

Adapt the pace to your level of fitness and that of your fellow hikers. **The weakest member of your group determines the pace!** Do not split up the group or leave the group. An overly rapid pace leads to premature fatigue and overexertion, and consequently to exhaustion.

### 5) Proper provisions

Be sure to take along adequate supplies of electrolyte **drinks** and **energy-rich provisions**. Take the time to eat breakfast, but remember that you don't conquer the summit on a full stomach. Take **regular snack breaks**, being sure to **replenish your fluids**. **No alcohol!** Alcohol tires you out and affects your judgment. Next to hypothermia, dehydration is the most frequent cause of collapse.

### 6) Monitor the weather

As early as possible, while your hike is still in the planning stages, **start collecting information about the weather**. **Observe weather conditions** prior to your hike. Responding in an appropriate and **timely** fashion to changes in the weather, including **turning around or seeking shelter in the event of inclement weather**, is a sign of strength and prudence. Weather does not adapt to us. Being cold and wet can lead rapidly to hypothermia.

### 7) How to react in an emergency

In an emergency, **phone the Mountain Rescue emergency call number at 140** (Vorarlberg: 144). Describe the accident and location as accurately as possible (who, what, where, how many, when). **Remain calm**, follow instructions and stay at the scene of the accident until help arrives. Use the mobile phone sparingly to save the battery. As a rule, **stay with an injured person**; do not leave the scene. Utilize the **alpine distress signal** (e.g., when the exact location is unclear).

