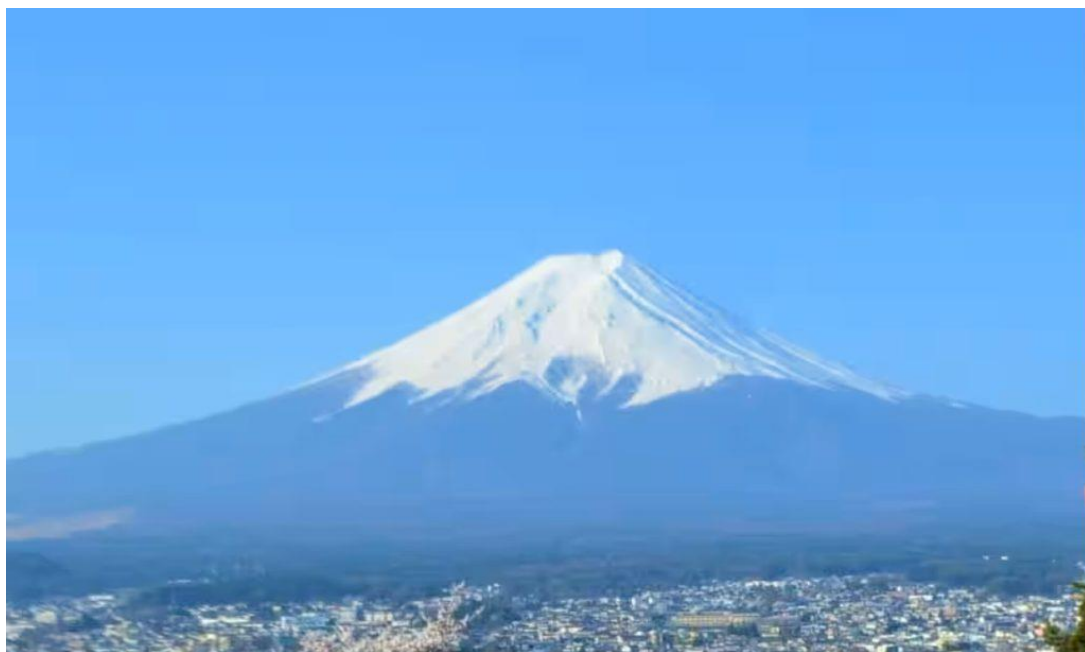


Make Reckless Mount Fuji Climbers Pay for Their Rescue

日本一の山・富士山に、今「救助のあり方」をめぐる新たな動きが起きています。冬場の登山シーズン外に無謀な挑戦をする人が後を絶たず、命を守るためのヘリ救助に多額の費用がかかっているそうです。そこで山梨県などでは、救助費を一部自己負担にする案が検討されているとのこと。あなたは、誰もが安心して登山を楽しむために、どんなルールや仕組みが必要だと思いますか？講師と話し合ってみましょう。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

Shizuoka and Yamanashi prefectures are considering charging for helicopter rescue services as a way to combat accidents on Mount Fuji. In separate press conferences, the governors of the two prefectures expressed their desire to work together on viable solutions to the problem of reckless climbers.

A recent series of accidents on Mount Fuji has involved off-season climbers lacking the necessary equipment and preparation. Reasonably considered, individuals who ignore warnings should cover at least part of the costs of their rescue. That is the only way to discourage reckless and off-season climbing of Japan's highest mountain.

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Source: Make Reckless Mount Fuji Climbers Pay for Their Rescue
JAPAN Forward

1. Article

The two prefectures should move to make the fee a reality. In the process, they should discuss the areas it will cover and what share of the costs rogue climbers would be required to pay.

Repeated Trouble with Off-season Climbers

Shizuoka and Yamanashi prefectures began considering the matter after a Chinese university student got in trouble twice on Mount Fuji in April. The first time, he ignored that the mountain was not open for climbers. Then, when he found himself unable to move near the summit, he had to be rescued by a Yamanashi Prefecture disaster prevention helicopter.

Learning nothing from that experience, he was back on the mountain four days later. He later claimed he had returned to [retrieve](#) his smartphone and other personal items left behind on the summit during his earlier failed climb. This time, the Shizuoka Prefectural Police Mountain Rescue Team had to rescue him.

In May, two other Chinese men briefly found themselves unable to move, and rescue teams were activated. They eventually managed to get down the mountain under their own power. Even in June, there is an elevated risk of getting in trouble on Mount Fuji due to occasional snow and high winds. For this reason, the official period set for climbing to the summit is limited to between early July and early September. Outside of these periods, the hiking trails are closed.

Off-season rescue operations can also be dangerous. Not only do they require considerable effort and expense, but there is also the risk of secondary disasters due to wind gusts and other unexpected complications. The number of climbers showing a shocking lack of common sense and disdain for the rules has, therefore, triggered concern.

1. Article

Deterring Risky, Offending Behavior

It is only natural that local governments would ask such offenders to pay for their rescues. If it costs people a reasonable amount if they get into trouble, they may think twice about such risky behavior.

Originally, mountain rescue operations by helicopter were generally conducted by the private sector on a commercial basis. For such rescues, the costs could range from hundreds of thousands to millions of JPY (thousands to hundreds of thousands of USD). Therefore, climbers were advised to obtain mountain climbing insurance before heading for the mountains.

However, after the Great Hanshin Earthquake (1995), local governments' use of disaster prevention and police helicopters became widespread. Since then, for the most part, rescues have been a public sector function.

In principle, taxpayers pay for such services, and they are free to those rescued. However, all too often these days, people request rescues that are not necessary.

Things have started to change in some parts of Japan. Saitama Prefecture, for example, implemented an ordinance in 2018 that requires the collection of a fuel charge. Initially, the charge was set at ¥5,000 JPY (\$35 USD) for every five minutes of helicopter rescue operations in certain mountainous areas. That was raised to ¥8,000 (\$56) for five minutes since April 2024. Such an approach might also work for Mount Fuji.

Besides introducing fees, it is also imperative that climber ethics improve. People who get in trouble in the mountains risk not just their own lives. They should bear in mind that their actions also put their rescuers in harm's way.

2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. **reckless** 無謀な、向こう見ずな

It's **reckless** to ride a bike without lights at night.

2. **retrieve** (～を) 取り戻す、回収する

She went back to the restaurant to **retrieve** her forgotten umbrella.

3. **think twice** (～について) よく考える、慎重になる

You should **think twice** before posting personal details online.

4. **in principle** 原則として、基本的には

In principle, I agree with the plan, but some parts need revision.

5. **imperative** 非常に重要な、急を要する

It is **imperative** to finish this report before the meeting.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. Why are Shizuoka and Yamanashi considering charging for helicopter rescues on Mt. Fuji?
2. What did the Chinese university student do after being rescued once?
3. What risk is associated with off-season rescue operations on Mt. Fuji?
4. Do you think climbers should pay part of the rescue costs?
Why or why not?
5. What kind of rules or systems would help prevent reckless climbing?

4. 富士山のヘリ救助 有料化で無謀な登山防げ

富士山での遭難対策として、静岡、山梨両県がヘリコプターによる救助の有料化を検討している。両県知事がそれぞれの会見で、連携して議論を深めたいと意欲を示した。

富士山では、閉山期間中にもかかわらず軽装備で登山し、遭難する事故が相次いでいる。無謀な登山を思いとどまらせる上でも救助費用を一部負担させる措置は妥当だ。両県は対象エリアや負担額などを協議し、有料化を実現してもらいたい。

両県が検討を始めたきっかけは、中国人の大学生が4月、富士山で2回も遭難したことだ。1回目は山頂付近で動けなくなり、山梨県の防災ヘリが救助した。だが大学生は4日後、山頂にスマートフォンなどを置き忘れたとして再び登山し、今度は静岡県警の山岳遭難救助隊に助け出された。

このほか5月にも別の中国人男性2人が一時動けなくなり、自力で下山したものの救助隊が出動する事態となった。

富士山は6月でも残雪や強風などで遭難のリスクが極めて高い。このため一般の登山者が山頂まで登れる期間は7月上旬～9月上旬と定められ、それ以外は登山道が閉鎖されている。

閉山期間中は救助も困難だ。多大な労力と費用がかかる上、突風などで二次災害の危険もある。非常識な登山が相次ぐ中、地元自治体が自己負担を求めるのは当然だろう。遭難すれば相応の費用がかかると認知されれば、抑止効果が期待できる。

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JAPAN Forward

4. 富士山のヘリ救助 有料化で無謀な登山防げ

もともと山岳遭難では、民間による有料のヘリ救助が一般的だった。数十万～数百万円の費用がかかるため、山岳保険への加入が推奨されてきた。

しかし阪神大震災以降、自治体の防災ヘリや警察ヘリの配備が進み、公的救助が中心となった。原則無料であり、安易な救助要請が目立つようになったとの指摘もある。

全国では埼玉県が平成30年から、一部山岳地帯で防災ヘリによる救助が行われた場合、5分ごとに燃料費相当の5千円（昨年4月からは8千円）を徴収する条例を定めて実施している。富士山でも参考になろう。

有料化の実現とともに、登山者のモラル向上が必要だ。遭難すれば自分の命が危ないだけではない。救助にあたる関係者にも危険が伴うことを、肝に銘ずべきだ。