

## **Time to Change Rescue Attitudes for a New Generation**

Dale R. Atkins

*RECCO AB, Alpine Rescue Team, Boulder, CO, USA*

Today's attitudes about organized avalanche rescue- too late and too slow- are based on circumstances more than 20 years old. This generational difference creates a serious problem because outdated attitudes guide and affect current avalanche rescue responses. The old attitudes offer no advantages to avalanche victims and rescuers, and in a few cases have likely harmed avalanche victims. Review of more than 40 years of US avalanche rescue records, historical and contemporary avalanche education materials, identifies four main conditions that have changed significantly and optimistically; however, attitudes toward organized rescue have become more pessimistic. A generation ago communication, travel, search technology, and emergency care were barriers to organized rescue and survival, but today these same conditions benefit greatly rescuers and victims. In parts of North America and Europe, the organized rescue response sometimes occurs simultaneously with companion rescue or even replaces companion rescue. The paper reviews the changes in the four main rescue conditions, quantifies changes (where possible), and challenges commonly held assumptions. Adopting new attitudes towards organized rescue that match the current circumstances of a new generation will better help rescuers and avalanche victims.