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British Tourist Fined Over £12,000 After Ignoring Trail Closure and Triggering Helicopter Rescue in Italy

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A British tourist has been fined more than £12,000 after ignoring multiple warnings and hiking along a closed mountain trail in northeast Italy, ultimately requiring a costly helicopter rescue. The 60-year-old man, whose identity has not been released, ventured onto the Via Ferrata Berti in the Dolomites, a hazardous path that had been officially closed due to continuous landslides.

The hiker contacted the alpine rescue service after encountering falling rocks at an altitude of 2,400 metres, prompting a helicopter deployment from San Vito di Cadore. According to Nicola Cherubin, head of the rescue team, the man appeared frightened and claimed not to have seen the clear signage posted in English warning that the trail was closed “due to risk of collapse”.

While he was not physically injured, the Brit was found to be in the direct path of the ongoing Croda Marcora landslide. Authorities have confirmed that he was fined €14,225 (approximately £12,300), with €11,160 of that amount allocated to cover the helicopter operation. The fine was issued by the regional health service of Veneto.

Cherubin explained to the *Daily Telegraph* that rockfalls have been occurring for over two months in the area, making it extremely unsafe. “He was really afraid,” she said, reinforcing the seriousness of the situation.

This incident comes shortly after two Belgian hikers were rescued from the same trail in July. However, unlike the British man, they were not charged, as Belgium remains part of the European Union (EU). Since the UK’s formal departure from the EU on 31 January 2020, British nationals without European health coverage or appropriate insurance may face steeper costs for emergency services in EU countries.

A spokesperson for the mountain rescue service told *The Times* that tourists who require rescue while uninjured, either from exhaustion or because they ignored trail closures, can be held financially responsible. “If you are from outside the EU without insurance, you have to pay more,” the spokesperson added.

The hiker had been instructed to remain in place while rescue teams coordinated through

challenging weather conditions. The initial helicopter was diverted due to another emergency, resulting in a two-hour delay before a second aircraft reached the scene and completed the extraction.

This case serves as a stark reminder for international travellers to adhere to local safety warnings and to ensure adequate travel insurance coverage, particularly in high-risk environments such as alpine hiking routes.