

**14 February 2011**

## **MOUNTAIN SAFETY COUNCIL REMINDS TRAMPERS AND HUNTERS TO TAKE ALL RIVER CROSSINGS SERIOUSLY**

The disappearance of an experienced hunter, believed to have been swept away down a Bay of Plenty river yesterday, highlights the need for extra vigilance and care to be taken when considering crossing rivers.

'In the heat of the chase for game, hunters may well overlook the safe practices that apply to crossing rivers safely,' says New Zealand Mountain Safety Council's Mike Spray.

'Hunters are often in areas, away from formed tracks, where there are no walking bridges that give safe access. Hunters need to apply the same process of assessing a river crossing as trampers do and make the correct decision on whether it is safe to cross or not,' Mr Spray added.

In 2010, Water Safety New Zealand recorded 86 drownings, of which 29 were river based.\* Lack of knowledge or errors of judgement can often have serious consequences but there are methods for crossing rivers that people can learn.

The Mountain Safety Council is a national organisation responsible for safety in land based outdoor activities. As well as setting standards and leading public awareness campaigns, 28 branches around the country offer a variety of training courses, including River Safety, for those heading off into the Outdoors.

The Mountain Safety Council and Water Safety New Zealand also advise that you read the River Safety pamphlet available from both organisations and that at the very least, before you or your group attempt to cross a river, you first consider:

- 1. Should we cross?**  
If in doubt, stay out
- 2. Where do we cross?**  
The choice of the safest place to cross is vital
- 3. How do we cross?**  
Use mutual support methods. The more people in the party, the more strength there is for crossing and for supporting anyone who slips or falls.

For more information about River Safety including the free pamphlet plus courses in your region please visit [www.mountainsafety.org.nz](http://www.mountainsafety.org.nz) or consult NZMSC's Bushcraft Manual, also available from the website and all good bookshops.

*\*Source: Provisional Drowning Report 2010, [www.watersafety.org.nz](http://www.watersafety.org.nz)*

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**ABOUT THE NEW ZEALAND MOUNTAIN SAFETY COUNCIL**

The New Zealand Mountain Safety Council was formed in 1965 in response to the increasing number of mountain, bush and firearms fatalities. Today, NZMSC is a national organisation responsible for safety in land based outdoor activities. We facilitate the setting of standards, offer training, distribute resources, lead public awareness campaigns and foster positive support in the community so that more people can discover and enjoy New Zealand's outdoors safely.

**[www.mountainsafety.org.nz](http://www.mountainsafety.org.nz)**