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THE MOUNTAIN SAFETY COUNCIL URGES TRAMPERS TO CHECK THE WEATHER

The weekend saw the first of the obvious seasonal change in weather for most of New Zealand and was especially noticeable to those venturing into the outdoors. This change brought in strong winds, high rainfall and even snow to some parts of New Zealand.

The news that two teenage trampers became lost in thick cloud on the Ngamoko Range in the Ruahine Forest Park over the weekend, highlights that trampers must make themselves aware of the weather forecasts in the areas they plan to visit and ensure they are prepared.

According to reports, the trampers were ill-equipped for the conditions but fortunately, after becoming lost, they were able to contact Police. A Land Search and Rescue team operation found the men and walked them out safely.

Chris Owens, Bushcraft Programme Manager for the NZ Mountain Safety Council said:

“Weather conditions can change very fast in the mountains, creating higher swifter rivers, slips and reduced visibility on higher areas.”

The NZ Mountain Safety Council advises that trampers whether alone or in parties should be prepared to sit out poor weather conditions, camp an extra night or two and wait until the weather improves. This means taking extra food, a communications device such as mountain radio or personal locator beacon and other equipment appropriate to the terrain and conditions.

“All outdoor enthusiasts need to follow the 5 points of the **Outdoor Safety Code** before heading out, especially at this time of the year when the weather can be more unpredictable,” said Mr Owens.

The Outdoor Safety Code

- **Plan your trip**

Seek local knowledge; plan the route you will take and the amount of time you can reasonably expect it to take.

- **Tell someone**

Tell someone your plans and leave a date for when to raise the alarm if you haven't returned.

- **Be aware of the weather**

New Zealand's weather can be highly unpredictable. Check the forecast and expect weather changes.

- **Know your limits**

Challenge yourself within your physical limits and experience.

- **Take sufficient supplies**

Make sure you have enough food, equipment and emergency rations for the worst case scenario. Take an appropriate means of communication.

For greater detail on mountain weather conditions visit the 'Weather for Mountains and National Parks' page on the Met Service website: www.metservice.com/mountain/index or for more information about safety in the outdoors and courses from bushcraft to avalanche awareness, please visit the Mountain Safety Council's website: www.mountainsafety.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