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MOUNTAIN SAFETY COUNCIL ADVISE SKIERS AND TRAMPERS TO TAKE EXTREME CARE DURING SEVERE WEATHER PERIOD

Following the severe weather warning issued by MetService, New Zealand Mountain Safety Council strongly recommends that skiers, trampers and other snow and bush users take extreme care before going into the outdoors during this period.

The Mountain Safety Council's main concerns are skiers heading into the back-country once the weather clears but while the avalanche risk remains high and other backcountry users who will find snow to very low levels.

Forecast gale-force winds and heavy snow over the South Island and lower half of the North Island today and tomorrow will make outdoor conditions treacherous. Trampers and skiers especially are advised that very stormy conditions are forecast for the North and South Island over the next few days.

AVALANCHE RISK WARNING

Mountain Safety Council Alpine/Avalanche Programme Manager, Andrew Hobman recommends that people take extreme care before heading into the mountains until weather and snowpack conditions have improved.

"As the system passes over the country large accumulations of snow are possible to low levels. This could create hazardous avalanche conditions over the next few days," said Mr Hobman.

"If you are planning to head into the mountains over the next week - **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**. Always check both weather conditions and avalanche conditions at www.avalanche.net.nz. Make sure that your skill level matches the conditions."

When venturing into the outdoors the Mountain Safety Council advises everyone to use The Outdoor Safety Code. The Code and information about outdoor safety can be found on the Mountain Safety Council's website www.mountainsafety.org.nz

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For further information regarding this press release or to arrange an interview please contact:

Andrew Hobman

Programme Manager: Avalanche & Alpine

New Zealand Mountain Safety Council

Cell: 027 462 626

Email: andrew.hobman@mountainsafety.org.nz

For general information regarding Mountain Safety Council and images please contact:

Andrea Hubbard

Marketing & Communications Manager

New Zealand Mountain Safety Council

DDI: 04 915 9286

Email: andrea.hubbard@mountainsafety.org.nz

ABOUT THE NEW ZEALAND MOUNTAIN SAFETY COUNCIL (MSC):

The New Zealand Mountain Safety Council was formed in 1965 in response to the increasing number of mountain, bush and firearms fatalities. Today, MSC 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.

MSC's Avalanche and Alpine Programme is one of the cornerstones of our organisation and is active in promoting avalanche awareness and safety in New Zealand. MSc has been providing avalanche education and training for more than 25 years. Our experts are frequently called upon for their knowledge and expertise

The Mountain Safety Council also operates **The New Zealand Avalanche Centre** and via their website www.avalanche.net.nz offers the Backcountry Avalanche Advisory which anyone planning on travelling in New Zealand's Back Country should use. MSC also organises and hosts the Southern Hemisphere Avalanche Conference bi annually.

www.mountainsafety.org.nz

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