

**12 October 2011**

## **MOUNTAIN SAFETY COUNCIL URGES TRAMPERS TO BE CAUTIOUS DURING SEVERE WEATHER PERIOD**

Following the severe weather warning issued by MetService today, the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council (MSC) strongly recommends that trampers and other bush users carefully consider their choices before venturing into the outdoors.

Mountain Safety Council's Bushcraft Manager, Chris Owens says the forecast period of heavy rain in the upper half of the North Island today could make outdoor conditions treacherous.

"Even experienced outdoor enthusiasts can strike problems in the outdoors. We strongly recommend people reconsider any planned trip into the outdoors, especially in the worst affected areas, at least until weather conditions have improved," he said.

Given this forecast, the Mountain Safety Council's particular concern is people attempting to cross swollen streams and rivers.

"Streams and rivers are forecast to rise quickly with surface flooding and slips possible following this period of heavy rain.

"You should never cross a flooded or fast-flowing river or stream. If in doubt, stay out. Trampers, in particular, have lost their lives in the past after being swept away when attempting to cross swollen rivers," added Mr Owens.

"The best plan when faced with poor, or deteriorating, weather conditions or a swollen stream or river is to wait it out until the weather or the water level 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.

When venturing into the outdoors the Mountain Safety Council advises everyone to use The Outdoor Safety Code:

### **1. Plan your trip thoroughly**

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

### **2. Tell someone**

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

### **3. Be aware of the weather**

New Zealand's weather can be highly unpredictable. Check the forecast and expect weather changes. Check track and hut conditions. Beware of rivers – if in doubt **STAY OUT**.

### **4. Know your limits**

Challenge yourself within your physical limits and experience.

### **5. Take sufficient supplies**

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

For further information about safety in the outdoors, courses and training, information on intentions forms or communication devices, please visit [www.mountainsafety.org.nz](http://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](http://www.mountainsafety.org.nz)**