

TRAMPERS STRONGLY ADVISED TO AVOID OUTDOORS DURING SEVERE WEATHER PERIOD

Following the severe weather warning issued by MetService today, New Zealand Mountain Safety Council strongly recommends that trampers and other bush users carefully consider their choices before going into the outdoors during this period.

Mountain Safety Council Outdoor Leader/Bush Programme Manager Chris Tews says the forecast period of heavy rain in most areas of the country today will make outdoor conditions treacherous.

“Even experienced outdoor enthusiasts can strike problems in the outdoors. We strongly recommend people defer any trip into the outdoors in the worst affected areas 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.

“In the affected areas, streams and rivers are forecast to rise quickly and surface flooding and slips are 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.

“The best plan when faced with poor, or deteriorating, weather conditions or a swollen stream or river is to camp an extra night or two and wait 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, 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 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 and emergency rations for the worst case scenario. Take an appropriate means of communication.

More information on outdoor safety can be found on the Mountain Safety Council’s website www.mountainsafety.org.nz.

ENDS

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