

## 1 AUGUST 2010 - NEW ZEALAND MOUNTAIN SAFETY COUNCIL - MEDIA RELEASE

### SKIERS AND TRAMPERS ADVISED TO TAKE EXTREME CARE DURING SEVERE WEATHER PERIOD

Following the severe weather warning issued by MetService today, 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 people attempting to cross swollen streams and rivers.

Forecast gale-force winds and heavy rain 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 South Island mountains during today.

### 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 the freezing level is expected to lower and large accumulations of snow are possible. This could create hazardous avalanche conditions over the next few days.

"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](http://www.avalanche.net.nz). Make sure that your skill level matches the conditions."

### RIVER CROSSING WARNING

Mountain Safety Council Outdoor Leader/Bush Programme Manager, Chris Tews recommends that trampers and other bush users take extreme care before heading outdoors during this period, particularly when attempting to cross swollen streams and rivers following forecast heavy rain.

"In the affected areas, snow melt and significant rainfall are likely to make streams and rivers rise quickly. Surface flooding and slips are also 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 have lost their lives after being swept away when attempting to cross swollen rivers.

"The best plan is 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.

"Even experienced trampers can strike problems in the outdoors. We urge trampers take extreme care and check the weather conditions and river heights before heading into the outdoors," he said.

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

Updates on snow and avalanche conditions can be found at [www.avalanche.net.nz](http://www.avalanche.net.nz).

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