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Take Care Outdoors When Weather Settles

Trampers, hunters and other back country enthusiasts, as well as those going into the outdoors much closer to home, are encouraged to plan ahead, be vigilant and stay safe when venturing into the outdoors.

The New Zealand Mountain Safety Council Chief Executive, Darryl Carpenter, says that “as the recent atrocious weather settles and people head back into the outdoors, they need to remember the Outdoor Safety Code and follow the five simple rules for staying safe in the outdoors; ‘plan your trip, tell someone your plans, be aware of the weather, know your limits and take sufficient supplies’.

“There have been several fatalities in the outdoors in the past six weeks, and a number of other high profile outdoor incidents that have required search and rescue services to be called out to assist. Let’s take care in the outdoors and give our hardworking LandSAR volunteers and rescue services some time off to enjoy summer.

“Well done to those people who checked weather conditions and either postponed their outdoor activity until conditions improved or took suitable precautions to ensure theirs was a safe and enjoyable trip into the outdoors.

“Remember to check the weather forecast and track and hut conditions before you go. Be prepared for weather changes. Beware of streams and rivers that are rising or are already swollen. Never cross a flooded or fast-flowing river or stream - if in doubt, stay out. The best decision when faced with poor or deteriorating conditions, or a swollen stream or river, is to wait it out until the weather improves or the water level recedes.

“Always tell someone your plans. The enhanced Outdoor Intentions process is available online at www.adventuresmart.org.nz and provides a number of easy options (printed form, email, on-line form or website) to ensure the alarm can be raised if something goes wrong on your trip and you become overdue. This simple step could save your life. Think what would happen if the unexpected occurs. How would anyone know? How long would it take for help to come? Have you left full details of where you hope to go, who is with you, what are your alternative trip and route plans?

“In the event you do get in trouble, make it easier for emergency services to locate you and provide assistance. Complete the Outdoors Intentions process with your details of your intended trip route and dates. Wear bright-coloured, reflective clothing. You cannot always rely on cell phone coverage in the backcountry so take a suitable communications device such as mountain radio or personal locator beacon. Plus, make sure you have extra food, warm clothing and shelter in the event you need to wait hours, or days, for help to arrive.

“If you are intending to go into the outdoors alone, be extra vigilant and take any additional precautions necessary to ensure your safety such as waiting until weather and track conditions are optimum and regularly check in with a trusted contact during your trip to confirm you are all right.

“Let’s plan well, prepare ourselves and our equipment carefully, stay within our limits of skill, experience and knowledge and make good decisions while we are in the outdoors. We want everyone to have great experiences and return home safe,” says Mr Carpenter.

Before heading out outdoors the Mountain Safety Council advises everyone to follow the 5 simple rules of [The Outdoor Safety Code](#):

1. Plan your trip thoroughly

You can avoid many potential problems by simply ‘planning’ a route that uses bridges, wire cages or cableways or use a recognised crossing place.

2. Tell someone

Tell someone your plans, where you are going and leave a date and time to raise the alarm if you haven’t returned. An easy way to do this is via Outdoors Intentions at www.adventuresmart.org.nz

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 more information please visit www.mountainsafety.org.nz or for more tips and advice or to complete your Outdoors Intentions please visit www.adventuresmart.org.nz

Ends 721 words

Sent by Gary Johnson on behalf of NZ Mountain Safety Council

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Download a print quality copy of the Outdoor Safety Code from www.adventuresmart.org.nz/media

About the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council

The New Zealand Mountain Safety Council (NZMSC) 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

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