

# MEDIA RELEASE

24 March 2015

## MSC urges a focus on firearms safety following tragic start to the roar

Mountain Safety Council (MSC) Firearms and Hunter Safety Programme Manager, Nicole McKee, says the death of Invercargill man Samuel Phillip Long (24) on Stewart Island yesterday is a tragic reminder for hunters to make firearms safety an absolute priority at all times.

Ms McKee says hunters need to understand, and comply with, the seven basic rules of firearms safety that make up the Firearms Safety Code, to ensure the safety of themselves and others.

“Even the most experienced hunters cannot afford to become complacent, even for a moment. If there is a firearms incident, chances are that one or more of the seven rules have not been followed.”

“Hunters need to ensure they identify their target beyond all doubt, before pulling the trigger. Movement, colour, sound and shape can all deceive you. Once the trigger has been pulled and a projectile leaves the barrel, there is no bringing it back.”

Simple actions, such as wearing colours that contrast with your environment so you can be seen by other hunters and immediately stopping hunting if you lose sight of anyone in your hunting party until you have found them again, can help to ensure that your entire hunting party returns safely, Ms McKee says.

MSC Chief Executive Mike Daisley said the MSC is absolutely committed to ensuring people have the right information and resources to make sensible, safe decisions that can save lives.

“The Firearms Safety Code, tips, advice and resources can be found on the MSC website, as well as information about how to book a Firearms Safety Course. I encourage people to take the time to visit the website and get informed.”

The Firearms Safety Code: Seven Basic Rules of Firearms Safety:

### **1. TREAT EVERY FIREARM AS LOADED**

- Check every firearm yourself.
- Pass or accept only an open or unloaded firearm.

### **2. ALWAYS POINT FIREARMS IN A SAFE DIRECTION**

- Loaded or unloaded, always point the muzzle in a safe direction.

### **3. LOAD A FIREARM ONLY WHEN READY TO FIRE**

- Load the magazine only after you reach your shooting area.
- Load the chamber only when ready to shoot.
- Completely unload before leaving the shooting area.

### **4. IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET BEYOND ALL DOUBT**

- Movement, colour, sound and shape can all deceive you.
- Assume colour, shape, sound, and shape to be human until proven otherwise.

### **5. CHECK YOUR FIRING ZONE**

- THINK! What may happen if you miss your target? What might you hit between you and the target or beyond?
- Do not fire if you know others are in your firing zone.

### **6. STORE FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION SAFELY**

- When not in use, lock away the bolt, firearm and ammunition separately.
- Never leave firearms in a vehicle that is unattended.

### **7. AVOID ALCOHOL AND DRUGS WHEN HANDLING FIREARMS**

- Good judgement is the key to safe use of firearms.

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