

12 JULY 2012

'ENSURE ALL FIREARMS ARE LOCKED UP' SAYS MOUNTAIN SAFETY COUNCIL AFTER TRAGIC SHOOTING

The death of a 10-year-old boy, believed to have been shot dead in a remote area of the East Cape is a tragic reminder that firearms and ammunition should be secured safely and never left unattended.

'While we don't know the exact circumstances of this particular incident, we can say that by law all firearms and ammunition should be stored separately, out of the reach of children, out of view and in a secure room, rack or cabinet approved by a Police Arms Officer,' said Darryl Carpenter, Chief Executive of the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council.

The Arms Code states that a firearm must not be put in a place where a child has ready access to it. All family members, especially children, need to know what a firearm is, what it is for and why it must not be touched. Letting children handle firearms under the supervision of an adult licence holder may help to satisfy their natural curiosity, but it is essential that children are taught that firearms are not playthings and must be treated with respect.

'In rural areas where guns are more commonplace, educating children about firearms safety is a must,' said Mr Carpenter.

'Whilst firearms must not be left unattended at any time, children should be taught not to touch a firearm without a licenced adult present, and if children find a firearm that they should seek the assistance of an adult,' added Mr Carpenter.

There are very few non-intentional firearms incidents each year in New Zealand which lead to injury or death which is an indication that the owners of firearms do follow the seven basic rules.

'However it is generally on the occasions when the basic rules aren't followed, that tragic incidents occur and the consequences can be absolutely horrendous for those involved,' added Mr Carpenter.

'We urge all firearms owners to refresh their memory of New Zealand's *Arms Code* and make sure that they follow the seven basic rules of safe firearms handling at all times,' concluded Carpenter.

THE FIREARMS SAFETY CODE: Seven Basic Rules of Safe Firearms Handling

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 only the magazine 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 when 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.
 - They should be out of the reach of children, out of view and in a secure room, rack or cabinet approved by a Police arms officer.
 - Never leave firearms unattended.
- 7. AVOID ALCOHOL AND DRUGS WHEN HANDLING FIREARMS**
 - Good judgement is the key to safe use of firearms.

For further information about firearms safety, please visit www.mountainsafety.org.nz

Ends 586 words

Notes to Editor:

Please note Firearms and Hunter Safety programme manager Mike Spray is currently unavailable.

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About the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council... not just Mountains!

The New Zealand Mountain Safety Council (MSC) is a national organisation with a mandate from our member organisations to encourage safe participation in land-based outdoor activities. We facilitate the setting of standards, offer training and education opportunities, create and 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. Our outcome is 'more people participating safely in land-based outdoor activity'.

FIREARMS SAFETY

MSC has the sole mandate from Police to deliver firearms safety training and administer a test to every firearms licence applicant as part of Regulation 14 of the Arms Regulations Act 1992. More than 9000 applicants, in 147 locations receive this training from a network of more than 480 volunteer firearms instructors annually. MSC also produces pamphlets, manuals and DVDs to promote firearms safety, collaborates with Iwi (Whakatūpato initiative), creates and supports key messaging to the public and actively collaborates across the sector in a bid to reduce non-intentional firearms incidents.

OUTDOORS DISCIPLINES & TECHNICAL EXPERTS:

MSC can provide technical experts who can offer advice, opinion and comment on the following activities:

Bushcraft:

Tramping, camping, survival, risk management, river safety.

Avalanche & Alpine:

Avalanches, mountaineering, snowsports.

Firearms & Hunter Safety:

Non-intentional firearms incidents and firearms safety. MSC is funded by Police to deliver firearms safety training nationwide and promote firearms safety to the public.

AdventureSmart , Outdoor Safety Code Outdoors Intentions:

MSC project manages these initiatives and works with the Department of Conservation, Police, LandSAR, NZ Search and Rescue, Rescue Co-ordination Centre and other outdoor organisations to deliver consistent outdoor safety messages, readily accessible information and resources to support getting more people out into the outdoors and returning safely.

www.mountainsafety.org.nz

www.avalanche.net.nz

www.adventuresmart.org.nz