



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Tragic incidents spark MSC call for firearms users to heed the seven basic rules

The New Zealand Mountain Safety Council (MSC) is urging hunters to follow the seven basic rules of firearms safety, following two tragic firearms incidents this week.

MSC Chief Executive Mike Daisley said the organisation's thoughts and condolences were with the family and friends of the two people killed in separate hunting incidents this week.

"The latest incident, where a 27 year old man was killed near Te Kaha in the eastern Bay of Plenty on Wednesday night, marks the sixth non-intentional firearms death this year – six too many.

"Incidents like these bring home the importance of keeping the seven basic rules of firearms safety front of mind at all times when handling a firearm. When there has been an incident, chances are that one or more of the seven rules have not been followed. A moment's distraction can be enough to turn many lives upside down," Mr Daisley said.

One of the MSC's new strategic platforms focuses on using data and information to gain insights into known safety issues and develop evidence-driven responses and specifically targeted safety initiatives, together with other groups and organisations working in the outdoor safety space.

"New Zealand has a robust firearms licensing framework and firearms legislation that serves us well. Increased education based on evidence and data, rather than legislative change, has the greatest role to play in reducing the number of unintentional firearms injuries and fatalities.

"With firearms, as with many outdoor activities, there is always the potential for things to go wrong. Tragic incidents often come down to human error and can be the result of one action or decision.

"Firearms users are responsible for their own safety and that of others, whether in their hunting party or other firearms users and people in the vicinity. We all need to contribute to a positive firearms safety culture by being confident enough to speak up if we see practices we consider unsafe," Mr Daisley said.

The MSC delivers the firearms safety programme nationally, including the firearms safety courses and testing that all applicants are required to attend and pass prior to receiving a firearms licence, in partnership with New Zealand Police. For more information about firearms safety, including the Firearms Safety Code, tips, advice and resources, visit [www.mountainsafety.org.nz](http://www.mountainsafety.org.nz).

### 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.

**--ENDS--**

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