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CAREFUL TRIP PLANNING AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS THE KEY TO SAFE HUNTING THIS SPRING

Spring is here, daylight saving has commenced and hunters venturing into the bush are being urged by Mike Spray, from the Mountain Safety Council, to ensure they are adequately equipped and use the Outdoor Safety Code as the basis for their preparation.

Checking the weather, carrying some means of emergency communication (such as a mountain radio or a personal locator beacon) plus being equipped to take shelter for an extra night should things go wrong, are all key to being prepared for the unexpected.

Firearms Safety and Hunter Training Programme Manager, Mike Spray, said:

“Before going into New Zealand’s backcountry this spring hunters need to plan well and have the skills and experience to deal with unexpected situations. Navigating in poor visibility, taking appropriate clothing and equipment and being able to cope with extreme weather conditions are all necessities for those who venture into this environment.”

Even during the spring months the weather can deteriorate rapidly and cold conditions can be encountered with little warning. Plus in alpine areas and above the bush-line there is also an increased avalanche risk to take into consideration.

“Even experienced hunters can strike problems in the outdoors,” said Mr Spray. “Survival may then rely on your ability to wait it out until conditions improve or to raise the alarm quickly. Careful preparation, making the right decisions and having a back-up plan when things go wrong can ensure your hunting trip is safe and enjoyable,” added Mr Spray.

When venturing into the outdoors Mr Spray advises every hunter to ‘know before you go’ and follow the 5 simple rules of the Outdoor Safety Code:

- 1. Plan your trip** – Seek local knowledge and plan the route you will take and the amount of time you can reasonably expect it to take.
- 2. Tell someone** - use the Outdoors Intentions process to tell someone where you’re going, when you’ll be back and how to raise the alarm if you don’t return
- 3. Be aware of the weather** – New Zealand’s weather can be highly unpredictable. Check the forecast and expect weather changes.
- 4. Know your limits** – challenge yourself within your physical limits and experience. Maintain outdoor skills including navigation and dealing with emergencies.
- 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 regarding safety in the outdoors, please visit www.mountainsafety.org.nz

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ABOUT THE NEW ZEALAND MOUNTAIN SAFETY COUNCIL (MSC)

The New Zealand Mountain Safety Council was formed in 1965 in response to the increasing number of mountain, bush and firearms fatalities. Today, MSC 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.

MSC's volunteer firearms instructors are approved by NZ Police to deliver firearm safety training and administer the Firearm Safety Test to new firearms licence applicants. MSC is also proactive in delivering key firearms safety messaging campaigns throughout New Zealand and produces publications including the 'Going Hunting' pamphlet.

www.mountainsafety.org.nz