

## ***COVID-19 lockdown response - Key Messages***

### ***March 2020***

#### ***Headline Statement***

Representatives from the Search and Rescue sector, Water Safety sector, Outdoor Recreation sector and Government agencies involved in search and rescue are united in their support of the Prime Minister's message during the lockdown period relating to COVID-19 – **“stay at home to save lives.”**

#### ***1. Key Messages***

- All New Zealanders need to listen to the advice of authorities during this period. Stay at home and avoid non-essential movements.
- As individuals we need to recognise that our actions can have an effect on others.
- Think of the rescue services, most of whom are volunteers. They are also in self-isolation during this period. If you put yourself at risk, you're potentially putting others at risk too.
- Nobody should be undertaking activities where people may unintentionally require emergency or rescue services.
- You should not do any activities where you may unintentionally end up needing emergency services. This includes tramping, hiking into backcountry or remote areas, going recreational boating, fishing and swimming.
- If you get into trouble you will put others at risk who will have to come out of self-isolation to help you and potentially be exposed to COVID-19.
- The message is simple and clear – stay out of and off the water, away from the backcountry and remote locations.

- Our beaches, oceans, rivers and lakes are our playground. So are our mountains, hills and great walks. We will all have plenty of opportunities to enjoy our wonderful country once this is over, we all want New Zealanders to stay safe and well.
- Stay at home, stay out of the backcountry, put the trip plans on ice and save them for another day.
- We expect the public to do the right thing for their safety and the safety of others. The majority of DOC rangers will be self-isolating like the rest of NZ and need to focus on their wellbeing and the wellbeing of those close to them.
- For everyone's safety, at alert level 4 people should not head into the backcountry or remote areas, nor should they undertake outdoor activities (such as adventure sports or hunting) that would expose them to higher levels of risk.
- Hut wardens will not be in place, communications may be limited and we do not want to place unnecessary strain on health services.

## ***2. Exercise and Recreation***

- We encourage people to continue considered exercise and recreation within the boundaries of the relevant authority advice.
- Stick to simple outdoor exercise.
- It is ok and recommended you head outdoors in your family or self-isolating units. To prevent the spread of COVID-19, choose a quiet location close to home, keep a safe distance from others and follow all government guidance.
- While it is important to get some exercise we are urging everyone to avoid going recreational boating, fishing and swimming or tramping into remote areas.
- Exercise shouldn't include any activities where you may unintentionally end up needing emergency services. This includes

tramping, hiking into backcountry or remote areas, going boating, fishing and going swimming or into/on the water.

### **3. General**

- This is a time for New Zealanders to pull together to ensure that our emergency services are available to help those in highest need.
- New Zealand's search and rescue services are predominantly made up of volunteers who are also in lockdown.
- We are all in this together and everyone has to do their part to fight and beat COVID-19. That means recreating responsibly and not putting our emergency and rescue services at unnecessary risk. They need to be fully available to respond to COVID-19 so be responsible about the type of exercise you undertake and where.

#### **Participating agencies**

- Water Safety New Zealand
- NZ Search and Rescue
- Land Search and Rescue
- Amateur Radio Emergency Communications
- Mountain Safety Council
- Surf Life Saving New Zealand
- Coastguard New Zealand
- Recreation Aotearoa
- DoC
- Maritime New Zealand and the Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand
- Swimming New Zealand