

FACT SHEET: MARINE WEATHER

Always check the marine weather forecast – if in doubt, don't go out!

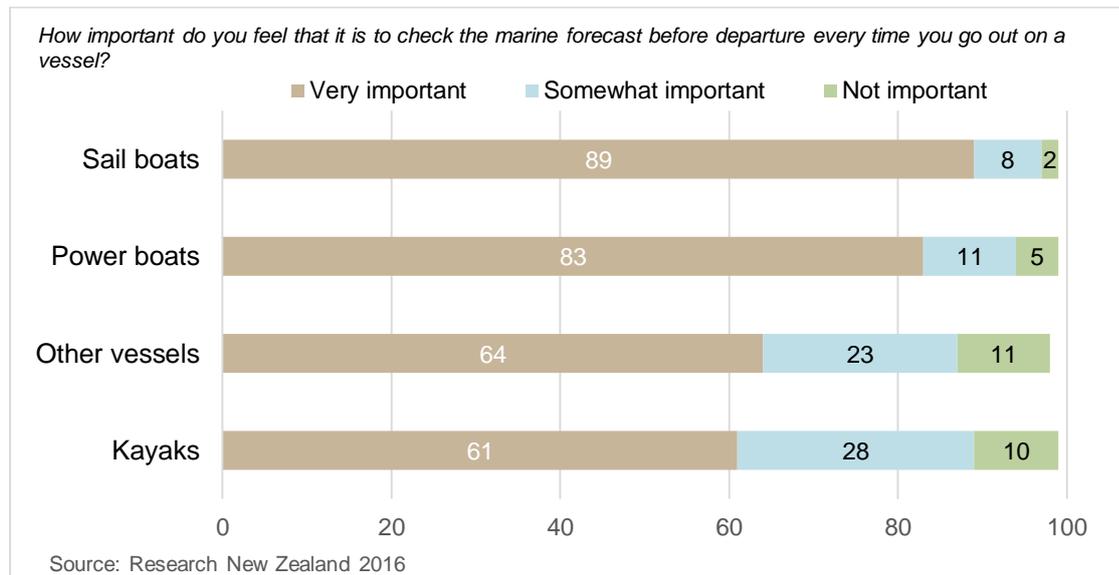
- Weather (swell/wave action or river state) continues to be a major cause of accidents that have fatal consequences.
- Not checking the marine weather forecast is one of the key risk factors for boating fatalities. The other key risks are: not wearing lifejackets, not carrying communications equipment, and drinking alcohol.
- New Zealand's coastal marine weather can change suddenly and without warning, turning a pleasant day out on the water into a dangerous or even tragic trip.
- The marine weather forecast can differ greatly from the land weather forecast, so it is important to seek out a marine forecast before heading out on the water.
- Checking the marine weather forecast is free and can be accessed via a range of sources, including VHF radio, the newspaper, smartphone apps or the Metphone (see below).
- If you are planning ahead or intend to be away for a day or two, get a long-range weather forecast. Having information in advance leaves plenty of time to alter plans or decide to wait for better boating conditions.
- Keep an eye on the weather while you're out, listen to the NowCasts on Coastguard radio in your area so you get a warning of increasing winds, and head for shelter at the first sign of worsening weather.

What the research shows

- Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) figures show 24 people died in recreational boating accidents in New Zealand waters in 2015. A total of 11 people have died in recreational boating accidents in 2016 (as at 19 December 2016).
- Research commissioned by the NZ Safer Boating Forum (formerly the National Pleasure Boat Safety Forum) found weather conditions (including the sea or river conditions) were a significant causal factor in 47% of recreational boating fatalities. *Source: NPBSF 2006*
- The same research found weather and water conditions were identified as factors (ie, contributory although not necessarily significant) in 72% of fatalities.
- Research from MNZ found 74% of all recreational vessel users said it was very important to check the marine weather forecast before departure. However only 65% actually do this every time they go out. *Source: Research NZ 2016*
- Larger vessel owners are significantly more likely than smaller vessel users to check the forecast every time before departure (78% of sail boat users and 80% of power boat users, compared with 46% of "other" vessel users and 48% of kayakers/canoers). *Source: Research NZ 2016*

The NZ Safer Boating Forum and Maritime New Zealand's position

- The NZ Safer Boating Forum is a network of government agencies, local body groups and marine industry associations and publications that promotes recreational boating safety in New Zealand.
- MNZ and the Forum recommend that skippers check the marine forecast prior to heading out on the water and listen for regular updates while out. As skipper, you are responsible for the safety of everyone on board your boat.



Sources of marine forecast

The most convenient sources of marine forecasts, including the 5-day outlook are:

- VHF radio – the MNZ maritime radio service provides forecasts announced on channel 16 – call at 0533, 0733, 1333, 1733 and 2133 hours
- Coastguard on VHF radio channels 20, 21, 22 and 23, including the “NowCast” continuous broadcasts in many recreational boating areas
- MetPhone – dial 0900 999 + map area number

Other sources of marine forecasts include:

- www.metservice.co.nz [New Zealand's national meteorological service]
- The free MetService Marine weather smartphone app
- Local Coastguard stations on VHF radio
- Coastguard Nowcasting smartphone app (Northern region only)
- Private coastal radio stations and radio stations for fishermen
- Local newspapers – but these can be out of date
- Local radio stations, especially in summer
- National Radio at 0400 hours.

For more information, contact MNZ's media line on 04 499 7318 or go to <http://maritimenz.govt.nz/Recreational-Boating/marine-weather-forecasts>