

FACT SHEET: MARINE WEATHER

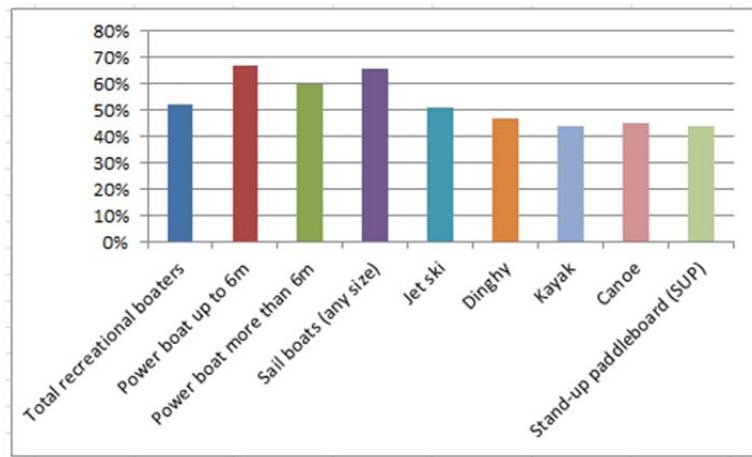
Always check the marine weather forecast – if in doubt, don't go out!

- Weather (swell and 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 NZ figures show 31 people died in recreational boating accidents in New Zealand waters in 2014-15 (June to June), 16 people in 2015-16 and 16 in 2016-17.
- 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 commissioned by Maritime NZ found 65% of all recreational boaties believe that weather forecasts are 'important to consider at all times'. However only 52% actually check the forecast every time they go out (compared with 65% in 2016). *Source: IPSOS NZ 2017*
- Power boat and sail boat users are significantly more likely than paddle craft users to check the marine or mountains forecast before going out on the water (67% of small power boat users, 60% of large power boat users, and 66% of sail boat users, compared with 45% of canoeists, and 44% of both kayakers and stand-up paddle boarders). *Source: IPSOS NZ 2017*

How regularly do you check the marine or mountain forecast before you go out on the water?



Source: IPSOS NZ 2017

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 promote recreational boating safety in New Zealand.
- Maritime NZ 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 Maritime NZ 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/safety/weather/>