



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release.

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The New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association (NZRCA) was saddened today to learn of the disappearance of a man in the Waiwhakaiho River.

The NZRCA says that this accident highlights some key safety requirements when recreating in rivers. NZRCA Safety Officer, Glenn Murdoch, said people should only venture out on rivers when they had appropriate training and equipment to deal with the river environment. "People often underestimate the dangers of a river. This appears to be a case of an under skilled and under equipped party that has sadly ended in tragedy."

Mr Murdoch refuted some of the comments made by New Plymouth police search adviser John Thomason. "You should never tie yourself to a kayak, boogie board or tube in a river. There should never be any ropes attached to the person or craft. This is a recipe for disaster. Any loose rope can easily become entangled around a person's limb or an obstacle such as a tree and trap the person under the water. This has happened in the past in New Zealand resulting in a person drowning. Mr Thomason is correct however, in that you should ALWAYS wear a correctly fitting buoyancy aid while using rivers."

Mr Murdoch said that training was easily available from local canoe clubs or training providers at a very reasonable cost, and subsidies were available from the NZRCA to help fund certain types of training. For more information on this contact Mr Murdoch at safety@rivers.org.nz or see the NZRCA website at www.rivers.org.nz.