

MOUNTAINS TO SEA
CONSERVATION TRUST

August 2026

Annual Safety Review

MTSCT Annual Safety Review Report

August 2026

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Overview



Much of Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust's (MTSCT or the trust) credibility is based on outstanding safety standards, exceptionally high safety record and our efforts to continually improve safety management, procedures and a positive safety culture.

Emergency preparedness, SOP practise, health and safety feedback and communication was achieved at our zoom national coordinator meeting, wananga training at Leigh (2026) and at regional visits (internal audit record). Regional team meetings and regular communication via emails and crew newsletters has allowed the team to engage in our SMS.

A review of our SMP and SOP manuals has been undertaken. The roadmap of H & S documentation has made it easier for the team to follow. The trust continues to have a separate Risk Register and Hazard ID (Part 2 RAS) for MTSCT, split into marine and freshwater overall, which is reviewed annually or when required .

Since 2002 we have led a total of 230,570 snorkel experiences - with 17,185 of those in the last season.

Annual review calendar

An 'Annual Safety Calendar' provides an overview of all the regular safety actions that need to be undertaken, while an 'Annual Safety Improvement Plan' (part of the annual safety report) helps to guide the development of the SMS.

Annual Safety Calendar

Management will plan for the following safety actions each year:

- Staff induction – new staff;
- Staff training – new and returning staff;
- Regular safety communication (safety updates, safety meetings etc);
- Emergency response practice;
- Equipment checks;
- Safety reviews - activity based, post programme &/or post season (as below);
- Annual review of SMS (as below);
- External safety audits (as below);
- The development of an Annual Safety Improvement Plan.
- Maintenance and review of SMS

- There is a process to ensure continual improvement of the SMS and safety outcomes.

In particular the Trust will ensure:

- The performance of the SMS is reviewed at least annually against the safety goals and objectives.
- There are scheduled internal reviews of adventure activities.

Review

This review should take into account findings from audits, reports from technical experts, and analyses and recommendations from specific reviews, including incident reviews.

- Where available, collated data and information from the sector is considered, including Adventure Activity Reviews.
- Adventure Activities are also reviewed when prompted by:
- Audit findings;
- Proposed changes to the activity, sites, or hazards;
- Changes to the environment;
- Changes to key staff;
- Incidents and emergencies;
- Changes in legislation (including local bylaws), standards, guidelines, codes of practices or similar information.

Annual review process

Timeline	Tasks
Daily (ongoing)	• Poutokomanawa (marine lead) monitors new hazard IDs, incidents, and near misses in real time via the Activity Log.
Quarterly	• Free lessons, incident investigations and reminders circulated in crew newsletters • July–August: • Full review of hazard IDs, incidents, and near misses. Draft annual Health & Safety Review Report. • H&S representatives contribute to setting new annual safety objectives and identifying improvements.
September (MTSCT meeting)	• New Safety Management Plan (SMP) approved
No later than start of Term 4	• Updated SMP, SOP's and forms circulated to the team. • All documents uploaded to the shared drive and website.
December (MTSCT AGM)	• Annual H&S Review Report tabled.

Table 1. Annual Review Process

Accreditations

Prequalification

Prequal info and link to report MOUNTAINS TO SEA CONSERVATION TRUST_Report.pdf

Adventure Activity

MTSCT snorkelling activities (EMR) are adventure activity safety audit certified AAO 534 (expires Aug 2029). Qualworx Adventure Activity Safety Audit Certification - Exp Sept 2026 -...

Worksafe approval letter for registration Successful registration - Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust (1).pdf

Mountains to Sea Conservation trust contributed to the Good Practice Guide for snorkelling Snorkelling-GPG.pdf

Top management approval

The draft report was tabled at the 28th July meeting. The final report was circulated to top management and approved via a special meeting on 25th August 2026.

Legislation changes

New Zealand's health and safety legislation is undergoing its most significant reform since 2016. The Health and Safety at Work Amendment Bill reduces compliance burdens and targets critical risks rather than low-level hazards.

Technical advice

We have received various advice and support over this last season from:

- Sacha Williamson - Snorkel rescue training expert
- Zoe Studd - internal H & S advisor
- Sinead Neville - animal culture - dog behaviour (response to trend)

Our SMP has been updated with our technical experts

Zoe Studd
Zoe has been delivering EMR since 2008. She has completed snorkel instructor training and has her open water Free Diver certification. She is a trained SCUBA dive instructor and is a registered teacher. Zoe acts as an internal H & S advisor, offering H & S advice and additional trainer for our coordinator team (signing off aspects of EMR coordinator training checklist)

Sacha Williamson
Sacha is one of New Zealand's most experienced freediving course instructors and instructor trainer. She has been a professional diver for over 25 years. She offers a wealth of knowledge for advice and in water rescue practice, training and qualifications for our coordinator team

Appointments

Health and Safety Committee

Health and Safety Representatives (HSR) are appointed annually to form a committee. There is not a requirement for one per region, just a range of workers. These assist in developing standards, rules, and policies or procedures for work health and safety. They make recommendations relating to work health and safety and carry out other tasks that are agreed between the business and the committee. An HSR is a worker who has been elected by the members of their work group to represent them in health and safety matters. Any business can choose to have HSRs and they are a well-established way to support worker engagement and participation. HSRs are elected by a work group, which is a defined group of workers who work for the PCBU.

H&S representatives for 2026/2027

Northland & National	Samara Nicholas
Northland & National	Kim Jones
Northland	Andrea Booth
Northland	Tracey Phillip
Auckland	Briar Broad
Auckland	Sarah Dimitrijevic
Wellington	Roni Mohan
Wellington	Alice Jenkins
Nelson	Rosalie Bennett
Northland	Greer Morgan
Gisborne	Hana Hardy
Coromandel	Shona Witiker

Northland	Greer Mogan
National	Lorna Doogan
National	Pat Hawkins
Hawkes Bay	Waimaria Hurinui
Trustee	Tom Kelly
Trustee	Celia Witehira

Table 2. Appointed H&S Reps for 26/27

Regional Coordinators - 26/27

Region	EMR - Marine	WBC - Fresh
Poutokomanawa	Samara Nicholas	Kim Jones
National	Lorna Doogan	Patricia Hawkins
Northland	Tracey P	TraceyP
Auckland	Sophie Journee	Briar Broad
Coromandel	Shona Whittaker	Shona Whittaker
Waikato	N/A	N/A
Gisborne	Amy	Amy Hardy
Wellington	Zoe	Liz Gibson
Taranaki	Rachel Eckersley	Wild for Taranaki
Hawkes Bay	Robert Houkamau	Jae Whellen
Nelson/Tasman	Thalassa Kawachi	Rosalie Bennett
Canterbury	N/A	TBC
Otago	N/A	N/A
Manawatu	N/A	N/A
Southland	N/A	N/A

Table 3. Regional Coordinators

Safety objectives

2025-2026 progress

Objective	We will show we have met this objective by:	Progress
Peer appraisals are happening in all regions	Each regions produces evidence	Number of peer appraisals in marine and freshwater have increased
Collect regional feedback on H & S systems and safety culture	Survey to be produced to test regional H & S understanding of roles	Positive response to new feedback form
Continue to provide more useful webinars	More webinars delivered. Example ideas include seal behaviour , rescue techniques, wellbeing, farm related safety, quick reference, spearfishing awareness	Dog behaviour webinar delivered on 2nd July https://youtu.be/hSshvWz95WI
Local historic risk for tsunami and evacuation (tsunami zone awareness on RAF 1)	Examples of updated RAFS	Now implemented on RAFS - note name change to Site Information - Risk Assessment and Supervision (RAS) - Matching school EONZ template wording, but Site Information is what it is!

Table 4. 2025-2026 safety objectives

2026-2027

Objective	We will show we have met this objective by August 2027
Post incident debriefs adopted following an incident report and are completed within 24hrs	Number of post incident debriefs
Maintain health safety and quality standards across the endorsed coordinator network	Increased quality of H & S paperwork submitted via the activity logs
Trial a different colour rash shirt for assistant/	Request feedback from team on their

trainee guides	implementation
Increase teams understanding of supervisions structures	Site Information- RAS Part 1 - show better descriptions
Increase consistency of communication of activity risks to participants	Increase from 77 percent to 100 percent via annual safety report

Table 5. 2025-2026 safety objectives

Communicating H&S Procedures

With Coordinators

Our organisation, as the principal PCBU, sets the health and safety standards and requirements that all contractors must follow while working on our sites or on our behalf.
Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA), contractors(coordinator team) engaged by our organisation are required to comply with our health and safety policies, procedures, and rules as a condition of their engagement. While contractors retain their own PCBU duties, when working within our workplace or under our management or control, they must work within the health and safety framework we provide.

Onboarding

- Online training modules have been developed using Make Ripples and a recorded delivery alongside short quizzes. This will be a requirement for all coordinators currently in training to complete and it will be a requirement by Term 4 delivery in 2026 for existing endorsed coordinators to complete.
- Changes have been made to the EMR endorsement checklist
- New in water management and quiz and online training modules completion
- Snorkel training section
- SSI Snorkel Instructor Course or NZQA 28391 & 28436 (formally 8296 and 4383) or existing divemaster or rescue diver or Basic PADI Freediver (all with EMR in water management training)
- Continued endorsement requires the coordinator to keep their first aid training current, keep a reasonable level of fitness (including pre-season fitness) , ensure compliance with our Safety Management Systems and procedures, highly recommended attendance at national Mountains to Sea Wānanga at least once every three years (or participate in equivalent local refreshment training and in water management for EMR) and continue police vetting and medical checks every 3 years.
- New sections have also been added including EMR In water management, Systems Induction and quiz and online training modules completion

Assistant coordinator requirements

Working alongside endorsed coordinator only
All initial coordinator info complete
- H & S contract complete
- Police vet (safety checking for endorsed coordinators only)
- Annual H & S quiz
- Sign code of conduct
- In water management training (EMR only)

Highly recommended to have first aid and attend wananga

H & S roadmap

https://canva.link/pqoj5dnx1jzfegy

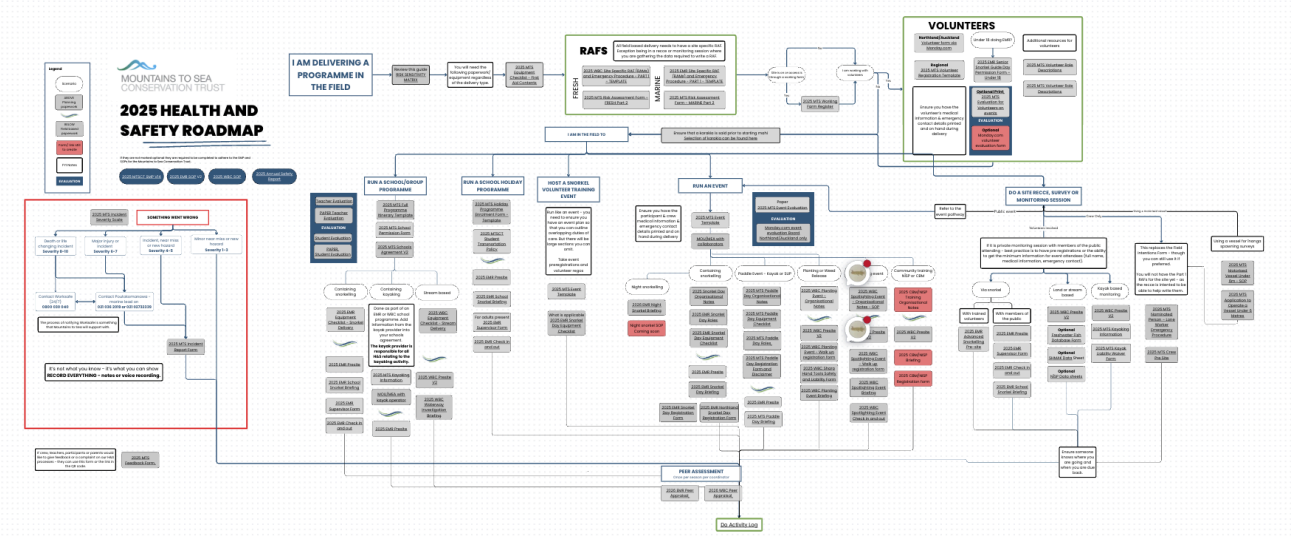


Figure 1. H & S Roadmap

Pre-season

Coordinator training reminder!

Pre-season coordinator skills/fitness refresh recommendation (team exercise that could coincide with internal H & S meeting or volunteer/rangatahi training)

- Demonstrate surface and underwater swimming using a mask and snorkel.
- Duck dive to 4 metres and retrieve an item from that depth.
- Perform unconscious snorkeller recovery from 4 meters.
- Demonstrate rescue procedures for a snorkeler who has suffered shallow-water blackout.
- Support buddy and tow or push 50 metres in a simulated rescue exercise

Health and Safety Quiz 2025 overview

A 2026 quiz will be developed based on this 2025 annual safety report

Quiz results from the 2025 Quiz

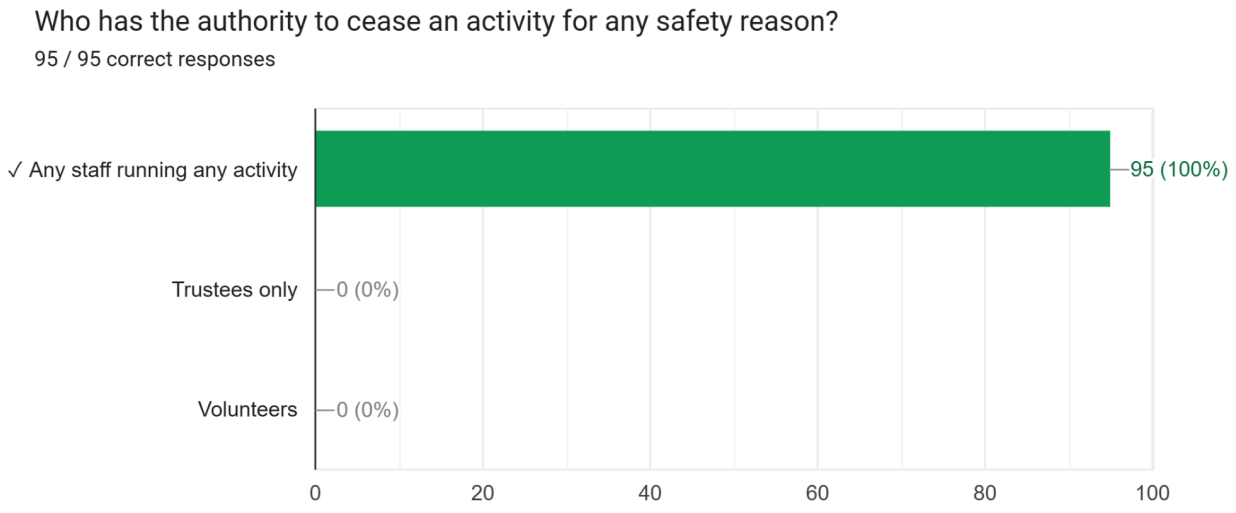


Figure 2. Authority to cease activity

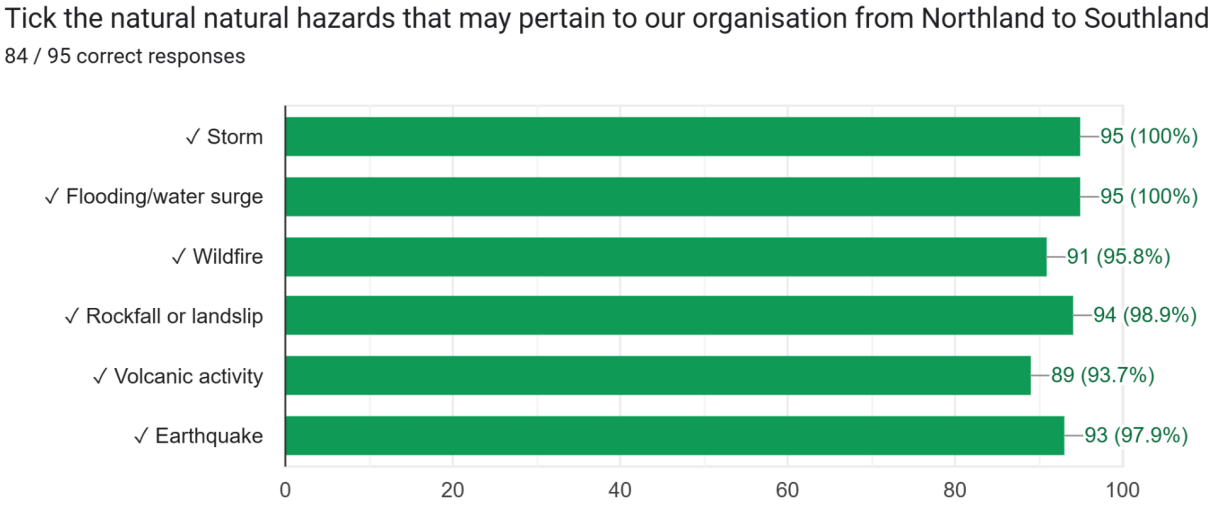


Figure 3. H&S Quiz Results - Natural Hazards

Annual health and safety culture survey 2026

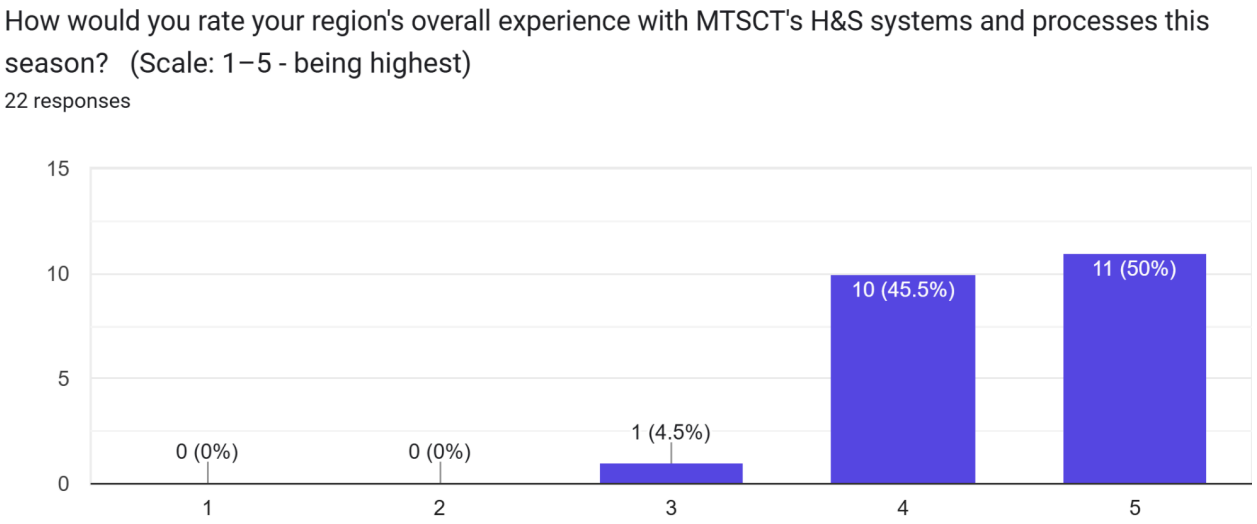


Figure 4. Overall experience with H&S systems and processes

Comment on your region's overall experience with MTSCT's H&S systems and processes this season?

- We had very experienced coordinators that have been using the SMS and SOPs for various seasons now. Keeping the same H&S structure meant they were all familiar and experienced to continue delivery with any major training/updates needed.
- H&S roadmap makes the processes much easier to follow correctly. Having all up to date forms linked in there is helpful.
- Great infographics and regular updates between regions has helped us to maintain comprehensive H&S updates
- Great and our discussions keep h and s relevant and updated

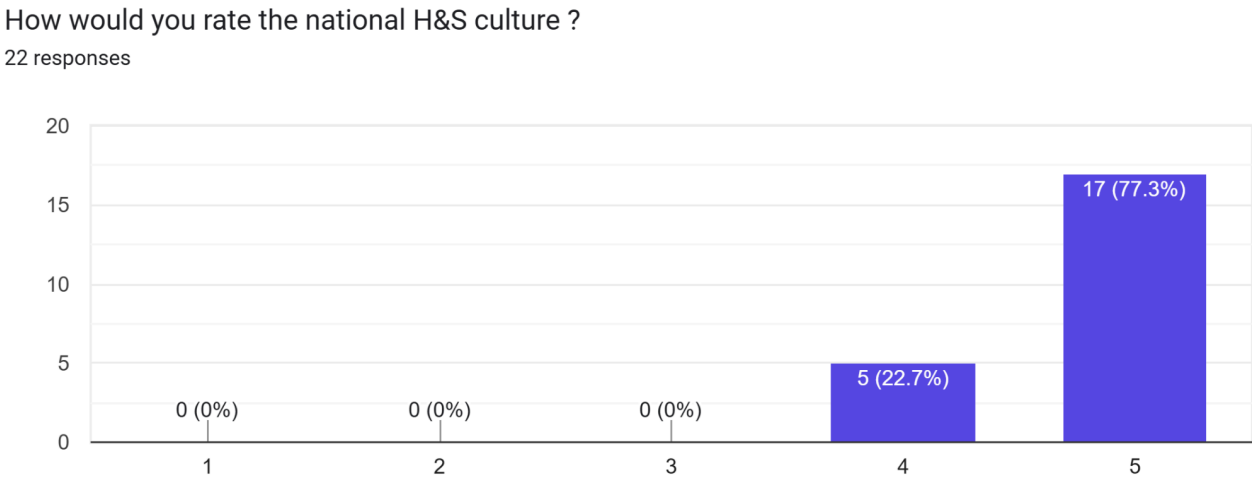


Figure 5. Rating of H&S Culture

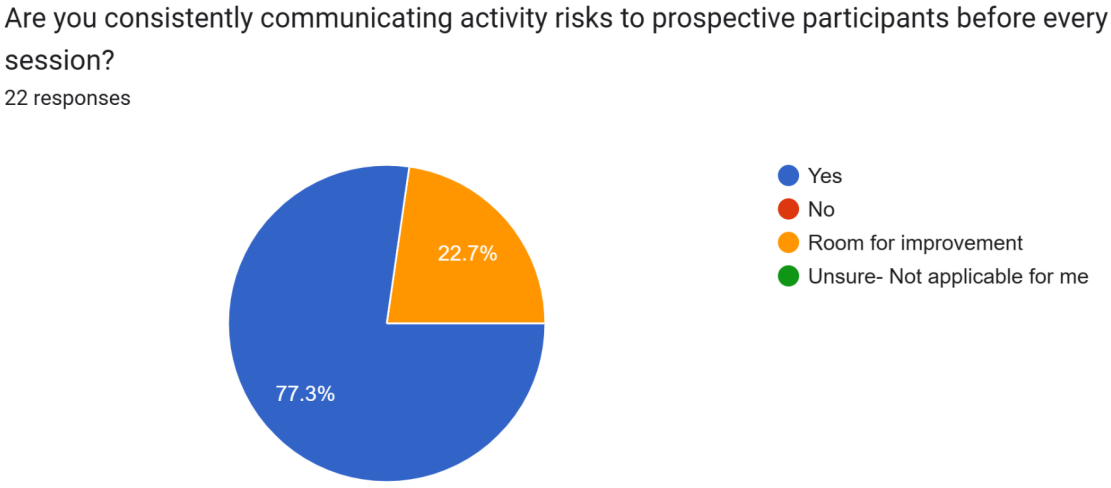


Figure 6. Communication of activity risks

Paper or online forms debate

Acknowledging the frequent request to digitalise H & S paperwork such as the pre site form. The current verdict is that paper or reusable laminated forms allow dynamic conversations to be recorded - that would get lost if the record was digital. H&S obligations are less likely to become a tick box exercise with paper forms.

This view is shared by the auditor.

Recommendation

Use a whiteboard to show your itinerary for the day for school delivery and community events - its nice and dynamic and can be easily be changed if a delay to the plan.



Figure 7. Whiteboard itinerary example

Regional H & S meetings – scenario practice sharing

Internal meetings need to cover off items in the regional internal H & S team meeting template . Overlapping duties of care is to be formalised through MOU's and/or signing off as part of event plans. Through the review process it was noted that the regions could provide additional evidence of regional emergency practice. Event plans are required for events such as planting days with multiple partners/stakeholders. The SMP and SOP for the activities must be clearly stated on the plan.

Jellyfish – Managing This Dynamic Hazard

At certain times of year more jellyfish seem to be in the water. As a reminder, jellyfish are a classic example of a dynamic hazard that requires careful management during your sessions.

Assessment and Planning

During your shallow water assessment, if you note jellyfish presence:

- Identify the species
- Check for allergies noted in pre-site information
- Re-check for allergies with your group
- Brief participants on the dynamic hazard so they understand the risk

You might choose an alternate location if there are allergies to jellyfish and/or abundant dangerous jellyfish identified (e.g., relocation to the other end of the bay). Ideally, have this planned before the group arrives.

Mitigation Strategies

- **Coordinators:** Perform a site recce before the group arrives if it's a known area for jellyfish
- Make sure your group is aware of the potential hazard
- Advise the group of alternative snorkel routes to avoid hotspots
- Keep hot water in a thermos on the beach
- Ensure the group is as covered as possible (could suggest wearing socks to protect ankles)
- Brief the group on treatment for jellyfish stings and tips to avoid them as much as possible

Dangerous Jellyfish in New Zealand Waters

New Zealand's coastal waters are home to several jellyfish species that can deliver painful and potentially dangerous stings.

Portuguese Man o' War (Physalia physalis) – Most Dangerous

This creature is technically a siphonophore rather than a true jellyfish. It features distinctive blue, pink, or purple gas-filled floats and long trailing tentacles that can extend several meters. Its sting causes immediate intense pain, red welts, and in severe cases can trigger allergic reactions, breathing difficulties, and cardiovascular problems. Portuguese Man o' War are most commonly found during summer months and are often washed ashore in large numbers after strong onshore winds.

Lion's Mane Jellyfish (Cyanea capillata)

Found in New Zealand waters, particularly in cooler southern regions. While less common than the Portuguese Man o' War, this large jellyfish can have a bell up to 50cm in diameter with long, hair-like tentacles. Stings typically cause localized pain, redness, and itching, though they are generally less severe than Man o' War stings.

Box Jellyfish

Occasionally reported in northern New Zealand waters, though they are far less common and less dangerous than their Australian counterparts.

First Aid Treatment for Jellyfish Stings

The recommended first aid approach has evolved in recent years. For most jellyfish stings in New Zealand, including Portuguese Man o' War:

1. **Rinse** the affected area with seawater (NOT freshwater, which can trigger more venom release)
2. **Remove** any visible tentacles using tweezers or a stick—never bare hands
3. **Do NOT use vinegar** for Portuguese Man o' War stings, as it may worsen the injury
4. **Immerse** the affected area in hot water (as hot as can be tolerated, around 45°C) for 20-40 minutes—heat helps break down the venom proteins and provides significant pain relief
5. **Monitor** for signs of severe reaction
6. **Pain relief:** Use over-the-counter pain relief like paracetamol or ibuprofen

Avoid: Rubbing the area, applying ice directly to the skin, or using alcohol, as these may worsen the injury.

When to Call 111

Call immediately if any of these symptoms develop or if the sting covers a large area:

- Difficulty breathing
- Chest pain
- Nausea or vomiting
- Excessive sweating
- Altered consciousness

If symptoms persist or worsen, seek medical attention promptly.

Difficult or dangerous members of the public

Man acting erratically and entered the field trip site and made threatening remarks and swearing at the group. The group relocated and called the police . The group took an alternative route to

school. It's ok to just call it and leave equipment if necessary. Don't try and reason with the difficult person as most of us are not trained in deescalation.

Scenario
Erratic member of public announces themselves on field investigation and starts yelling and screaming at group

1. Involve field trip lead from group/school as soon as practical (E.G. lead teacher)
2. Regroup at identified assembly point
3. Call 111 and request police to de escalate
4. Walk/bus/transport to back up location if already planned and practical (start of day) or straight back to school
5. Leave gear at site if not practical to pack up
6. Follow up with a debrief/incident report (assess scale)

Know your comms

Communication between kayak safety watch and shore is referred to as communications

Radios, UHF or VHF and cellphones - these we refer to as communication devices

Volunteer updates

Volunteer terms are acknowledged and signed at each community snorkel day event. In lieu of online volunteer registration, supervision forms can be used for a one-off casual volunteer.



Figure 8. Volunteer training in the Whangārei Pools

Supervision structures

What are they

Effective supervision is about more than just a simple leader-to-participant ratio. The level and style of supervision you need for an activity depend on several factors:

- The **participants' age and ability**, including their fitness, health, and other specific needs.
- The **activity itself** and the **environmental conditions**.
- The **competence of the leaders and supervisors**.

Key Principles of Effective Supervision

Supervision for Different Group Needs

For a **competent and motivated group of young adults or adults** who can look after themselves and have access to emergency communication, a single leader may be enough. In this case, you must be confident that the participants can handle an emergency if the leader becomes incapacitated.

For **larger or more complex groups**, particularly those with special behavioral or health needs, the supervision structure should allow the person in charge to have an overview of the entire group rather than being focused on directly leading participants. When you have more than one supervisor, clearly **delegate roles and responsibilities** - this is especially important for assistant leaders, accompanying teachers, or parent helpers.

Planning for Emergencies

The number of leaders should be based on what's needed during an emergency, not just when things are going smoothly. In a crisis, leaders will need to focus on specific tasks, so there should always be enough supervisors available to manage the other participants. For example, if you are supervising a group swimming and someone needs to be rescued, at least one other leader must still be watching the remaining swimmers.

Managing High-Risk Situations

Many activities have high-risk "cruxes" or difficult spots, such as a steep section of a hiking trail. These situations often require one-on-one or greater supervision. A good way to manage these is to stage participants in "safe zones" away from the risk until you are ready to supervise them one at a time. For instance, if you have three inexperienced people who need to light a stove, have them do it individually so they can be directly supervised.

Documenting Your Supervision Plan

Your supervision plan should be **documented** and understood by the entire team on the day. This includes any changes in supervision between the planned activity and "free time." Your plan should also account for potential issues like leader fatigue, sudden illness, or injury.

For your programmes and events, be sure to document your specific supervision plan, considering the unique needs of your participants, the activity, and the environment. For example, a group with challenging behavior may need additional teacher supervision, or a challenging marine environment might require more lead coordinators in the water.

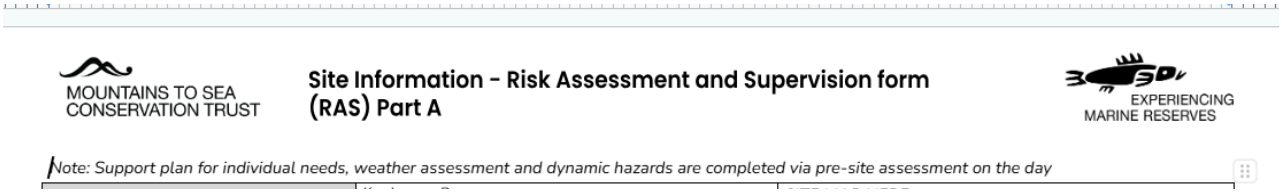
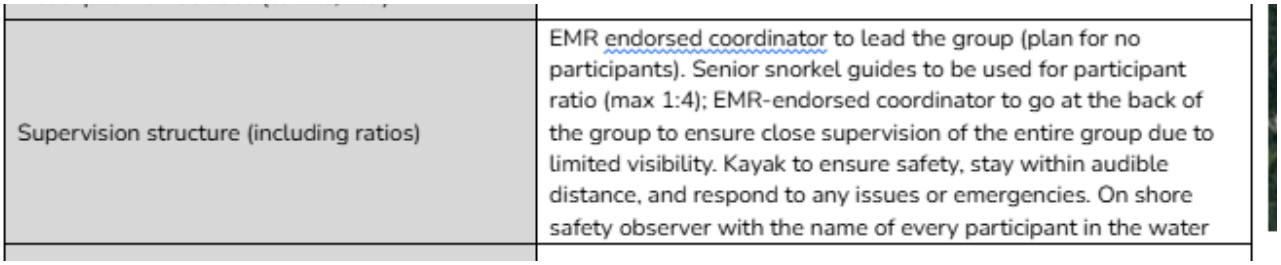


Figure 9. Site of supervision plan documentation in RAS Part A



Supervision structure (including ratios)	EMR endorsed coordinator to lead the group (plan for no participants). Senior snorkel guides to be used for participant ratio (max 1:4); EMR-endorsed coordinator to go at the back of the group to ensure close supervision of the entire group due to limited visibility. Kayak to ensure safety, stay within audible distance, and respond to any issues or emergencies. On shore safety observer with the name of every participant in the water

Figure 10. Site of supervision plan documentation in RAS Part A Cont.

Guidance

Some 'guidance' below

Group type	Supervision structure example	Paperwork (briefings for all situations)
Whanau snorkel	Led by 2 endorsed coordinators, mixed ages, adopt community snorkel day ratios (participants know each other, check in and out to be completed, run like a school guided snorkel, experienced members of whanau as supervisors Separate briefing for supervisors	Pre- site completed Check in and out Event registration form Supervisor form (if not a volunteer online form complete Event plan
Science snorkel (school)	A supervisor must be in direct supervision of groups (dedicated to watching the activity take place) undertaking science snorkels. Participants must have participated in training. Extra equipment may be required (add to itinerary) . School ratio applied	Pre- site completed Check in and out Supervisor forms Itinerary Event plan

	Additional equipment (gloves and hammer) and increased briefing required Separate briefing for supervisors	
Night snorkel	Endorsed coordinator familiar with night snorkel location. Night snorkel experience and leads without a group themselves . Use community snorkel day ratio, run like a school group tour Spotter should be crew or experienced volunteer Separate briefing for supervisors	Check in and out form Registration forms (online or on day) Volunteer online form or Supervisor forms Event plan
Corporate tour (12 people)	Depending on the experience of the group and location. Endorsed coordinator lead only Buddy system used within group	Pre- site completed or Advanced pre-site completed Permission form collected Itinerary
School Holiday programme	Use school programme ratio, supervisors supplied by MTS or mixture , experienced level of supervision for these as supervisors come from MTS All have their experience level pre vetted by the event lead (pre registration collected via Eventbrite)	Pre- site completed Permission form collected by MTS Volunteer online form or supervisor form (once off) Event plan
Community Snorkel Day	MTS team are based in the tent as event controllers and endorsed coordinators are also in water as snorkel guides (with oversight and observation of other groups in water Rate snorkel guides Separate briefing for supervisors/snorkel guides	Pre- site completed Registration forms Volunteer online form or supervisor form (once off) Volunteer sign in sheet Event plan
Poor Knights annual trip	1:2 or 1:4 respective to swimming capability and experience of supervisor Students are buddied up with their guardian, if the guardian is not deemed appropriate as supervisor, EMR coordinator is buddied up to go with them. We	Pre- site completed Event registration (acceptance to be a supervisor or not) Event plan

	have a roving EMR coordinator on photography duty that is also looking out for groups but not supervising themselves. Pre planned buddy pairing and customised water check in and out. Direct in water supervision by EMR, Indirect supervision from Dive Tutukaka (safety look out) Everyone to follow advised snorkel route and boundary (advised once on site) . Each group has a boogie board (unless graded haku). Whistles for all supervisors (clearly identified by red rash shirts)	
Youth group	Ratio same as school groups, mix of provided and MTS volunteers	Pre- site completed Check in and out Volunteer online form or supervisor form (once off) Volunteer Itinerary
Advanced snorkel	1:6, working in buddy pairs for trained participants. 1 EMR endorsed coordinator to 6 trained divers	Advanced pre-site completed
School snorkel	EMR endorsed coordinator to lead (ideally without having a group themselves) Some sites may suggest that the lead is to have no participants as part of Part A RAS. Body boards are used by EMR as buoyancy aids and for additional visibility. There should be 1 body board per buddy group for year 8 and below. At least 1 body board must be carried by the snorkelling group for year 9 and above.	Pre site completed Check in and out Supervisor forms Itinerary

Table 6. Supervision Structure examples

Reporting

Incident and free lesson overview

Marine and freshwater activity free lessons totaled 63 (compared to 77 last year), including 3 incidents since July 2025 - June 2026 via our daily log Monday.com system; these all feed into this Annual H & S report.

9 of the 60 are in relation to in-water (snorkelling) of which 1 of the 3 incidents was in relation to the ocean. 1 free lesson is in relation to natural hazards.

Trends this season include

- Slips, trips and falls
- Stray dogs

- Wasps
- Scraps
- Eel bites

Free lessons

Marine	Actions	Fresh	Actions
Rogue parents not listening	*Importance of whistle*	Electric fence shock	
Minor scrape x 2	*Well stocked first aid*	Minor scrape x 4	*Well stocked first aid*
Seasickness	*Good warning and advice in advance*	Slips, trips and falls	*Well stocked first aid*
Dehydration	*Reminder for self care*	Cutty grass cut	*Site specific hazards*
Bee sting in water	*Knowing if allergies*	Kayak capsize	*Clear briefing and supervision*
Thunderstorm during delivery	*Thunderstorm watch - check forecast throughout the day*	Hornet nest	*Knowing if allergies*
Wrong life jacket for kayak	*Check fit for purpose*	Inchy bites in bush	*Repellent for some locations*
School self appointed safety watch from paddle board - required assistance	*Discussion documented in pre-site*	Wasp sting	*Knowing if allergies*
Jelly fish	*Refer to Marine SOP for guidance*	Deep silt in river side after rain	*Extra care after rain events*
Pegs for gazebo	*Remind that pegs must be used*	Latex allergy to sticky plaster	*Make sure plenty of plasters and have an assortment*
Operators getting close to entry and exists	*Comms with operators to ensure overlapping duties of care*	Kid drinking from stream	*Advised not to*

		Rogue members of public	*It's ok to just call it and leave equipment if necessary . Don't try and reason with the difficult person as most of us are not trained in deescalation*
		Rogue dogs x 3	*Dog workshop*
		Eel bites x 3	*Crew news*
		Rogue freedom camper with dog	*Dog workshop*
		Swopping kayaks during session	*Collaborator to incorporate into briefing*
		Touching pest traps	*Collaborator to incorporate into briefing*
		Inanga game collisions x 2	*Reminder for inclusion in briefing*
		Recent spray at a park	*Updated hazard in RAS part 2*

Table 7. Free lessons

- Please note that a sore tummy or blood nose not caused by the activity does not usually need to be reported
- Ensure overlapping duties of care are clear for use of kayaks etc

Incidents

Marine	**Fresh**
Oyster cut (notifiable event - no intervention)	Stolon kikuyu grass slip (notifiable event - no intervention) - participant prone to falls
	Man acting erratically and entered the field trip site - updated protocol

Table 8. Incident record

New hazards

Part 2 RAS (Risk assessment and supervision form - formally RAF now updated)

Marine	Freshwater
Submerged wood	Recent spray near waterway or park
	Slippery stairs
	Plants causing itchiness
	Bog and heavy mud

Table 9. New Hazards for Marine and Freshwater

Reporting Dashboard

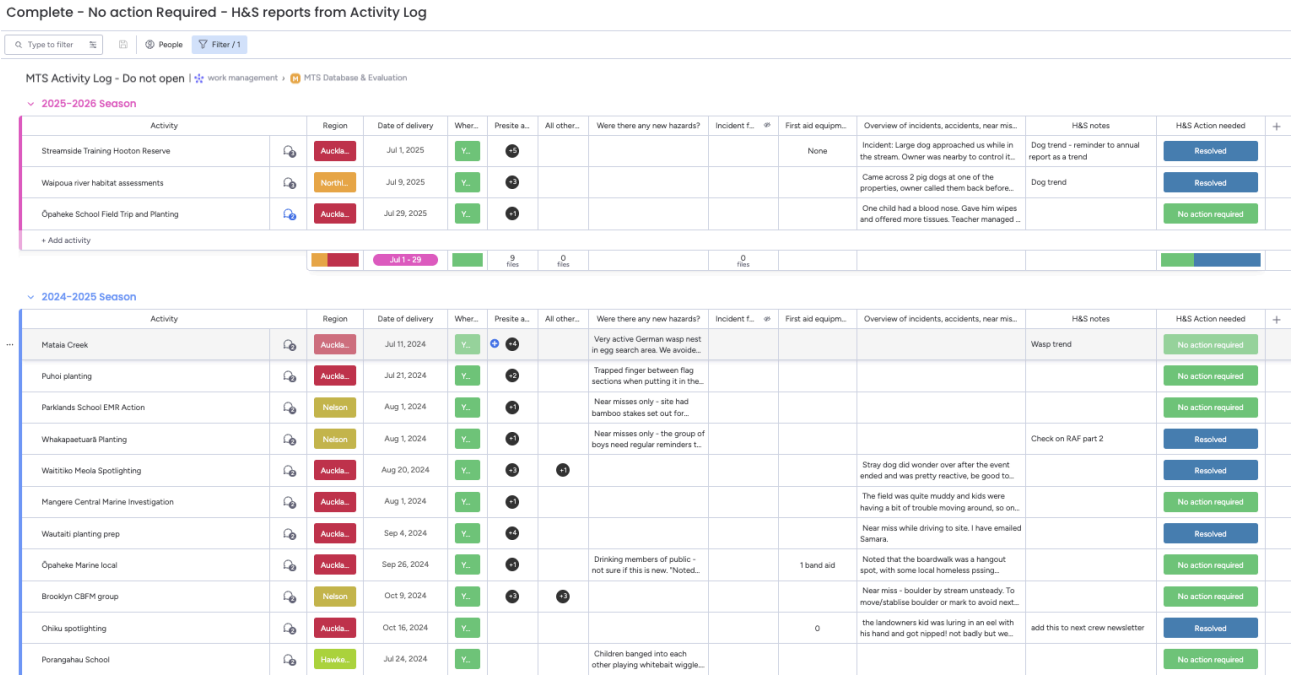


Figure 11. Monday.com H&S reporting dashboard

Information about incidents, trends, free lessons and timely reminders are communicated via our crew newsletters

Example material and link to all PDF MTS_Crew H&S Newsletter_5_feb_26.pdf



Figure 12. MTS Crew Newsletter Example - #2



Figure 13. MTS Crew Newsletter Example of infographics

Incident policy and notifiable events

- Incidents and near misses (free lessons) of the 1 and 2 severity ranking will be reported and recorded via the pre-site assessment form
- All accidents, incidents and near misses of the level 3 and above on the severity scale must be notified verbally to the Poutokomanawa/Co-director (marine lead) as soon as practical, and formally in writing (via the incident form) within five (5) days of incident occurrence. Report any notifiable events (see definition below) to the Poutokomanawa/Co-director (marine lead), who will inform Worksafe and Qualworx
- Post-incident emotional debrief within 24 hours
- All Accident and Incident reviews will be conducted within 7 days.
- All medical emergencies, evacuations, fires, and other incidents of a serious nature occurring on public conservation land or falling within Department of Conservation management must be reported immediately to the relevant Department of Conservation area or field office (see http://www.doc.govt.nz for details). Any such emergency or

incident occurring on land/property under other tenure must be reported immediately to the relevant land owner or manager.

- ➢ All accidents, incidents and near misses of 3 and above on the severity scale must be recorded on the Accident / Incident database (activity log)
- ➢ All notifiable events must be reported to the regulator (WorkSafe) by calling 0800 030 040. A notifiable event form can be found here http://forms.worksafe.govt.nz/notifiable-event-notification
- ➢ Also consider if the trust insurance provider should be notified

Preserving the scene (following workplace death or notifiable illness or injuries)

Preservation requirements automatically kick in if an event arising from your business or undertaking occurs. This includes: Work-related deaths. Notifiable illnesses or injuries (e.g., injuries requiring immediate hospital admission, amputations, or serious head injuries). Notifiable incidents (e.g., uncontrolled gas leaks, spills, explosions, or immediate and serious risks to health and safety)

Following a notifiable event, you must preserve the scene immediately after ensuring the safety of those involved. The site must remain undisturbed until a WorkSafe New Zealand inspector releases it, or until 48 hours have passed since the initial notification.

What does preserving the scene mean?

You must take all reasonable steps to ensure the area is not disturbed. This means: Do not change the work set-up. Leave any plant, machinery, substances, or materials exactly where they are. Stop all work that could interfere with the scene (though work can continue in unaffected areas).

When can you disturb the scene?

You are only permitted to disturb or alter the scene under very specific circumstances: To assist an injured person (e.g., administering first aid). To remove a deceased person (by an authorized individual).To make the site safe or minimize the risk of another notifiable event. Under the direction of a Police Officer. With explicit permission from a regulator or an inspector

Incident and accident investigation

An incident or accident investigation is a structured process of uncovering what happened, how it happened, and why it happened. The ultimate goal of an effective investigation is to identify the **root causes** of a mishap and implement corrective actions, rather than assigning blame.
This is carried out by the Poutukumanawa (marine lead)

1. Gather evidence
2. Document with notes and photos
3. ID and record information
4. Gather supporting documentation and records
5. Interview the person injured (this could be delegated to the coordinator)
6. Witness information collected
7. ID the manager and pass on info about the incident or accident
8. Who else was involved (other orgs)
9. Were the H & S systems followed
10. ID control methods
11. Address root causes
12. Review and adjust Health and safety systems
13. Engage and report to top management
14. Demonstrate commitment

Feedback & Testimonials

Participant feedback from events in 2025-26 highlighted strong outcomes in water safety, skill development, and environmental awareness. Most participants reported feeling safe throughout the activities, indicating that the event structure and facilitator guidance effectively supported a secure learning environment. Many attendees were engaging in snorkelling or rockpooling for the first time, with responses suggesting these experiences helped build water confidence and foster new skills. Feedback from teachers showed that 100% of evaluations stated that they felt safe during delivery. Feedback from students showed that 716 of 735 evaluations showed that students felt safe during their snorkel experience. Of those 16 that felt unsafe, 5 of them had not attended the field trip or had said they felt unsafe but had positive feedback around safety, the other feedback was around feeling unsafe in the bus on the way to the site.

New Contractor wellbeing policy

Operational debriefs (what happened, what worked, what to improve) are common. Emotional debriefs are not. After a water rescue, near-miss, distressed participant or coordinator, or any event with a high emotional load, hold a structured debrief within 24 hours that explicitly addresses how staff are feeling — not just what happened.

A simple debrief structure:

- What did you see / experience? (factual)
- What was your immediate reaction?
- How are you feeling now?
- What support do you need?

Policy updates

Child protection updates

Main update In a medical or physical emergency arising during school-based delivery, the school is responsible for transporting any students to emergency services if required

Sanitisation policy

More flexibility - need for sanitisation monitor

Biosecurity policy

Marine and freshwater protocols

Natural Disasters

Natural Hazard Risk Assessment Reminder

In relation to our snorkelling activities, we have identified natural hazards and assessed each of these according to the matrix, our incident record shows very little hazard risk these hazards previously.

General Risk Assessment – Natural Hazards - Reminder

Natural Hazard	Presents a Serious Risk?	Controls / Technical Advice
Storm - High winds, extreme hot and cold weather, lightning strikes, heavy rainfall, hailstorm, thunderstorm.	Yes – quite possible, incl: Strong winds Swell Heat & cold effects Lightening	SOP's to include: ● Monitor MetService / Windy, incl as part of pre-site ● Clear operating parameters through pre-site assessment Em Response Plan includes evacuation & shelter from storm
Flooding / water surge/Tsunami	Possible – due to tsunami or rogue wave	Site Specific SOP's to include: ● Understand local tsunami threat & advisory systems (NEMA) ● Signs of tsunami Em Response Plan includes evacuation
Rockfall or Landslip	Maybe - depends on site, & more likely on beach	Site Specific SOP's to include: ● Identify potential rockfall/landslide hazard and avoid (eliminate)
Earthquake	Unlikely &/or difficult to predict.	Em Response Plan includes evacuation & where to
Volcanic Activity	Possible at some sites	Site Specific SOP's to identify if threat at specific site (GNS) If so, develop trigger pts & monitor Em Response Plan includes evacuation & where to
Wildfire	Unlikely, could impact group on beach	Site Specific SOP's identify if serious risk, & if so: ● monitor fire risk (FENZ), ● act accordingly (ie/ fire bans etc) Em Response Plan includes evacuation & where to
Snow Avalanche / Ice Fall	Nil	Nil

Table 10. Natural hazards - risk assessment

Emergency preparedness

Emergency plans have been updated, especially in relation to earthquakes and tsunami
Site Information - Risk Assessment and Supervision form (RAS) Part 1 to specify if site in a Tsunami alert zone a where to evacuate to in the event of a tsunami alert.

Our staff are encouraged to practice evacuation to 'sense check' where they would go and what that could be like. On foot is recommended where there is a local tsunami risk as damage to roads

may mean you are not able to take a vehicle, plus gridlock is a real likelihood in built up areas. If there is a hill nearby, running up that is better than getting in your car.

New kayak safety watch form

2026 EMR Kayak Safety Watch Form.pdf

MOUNTAINS TO SEA CONSERVATION TRUST

EXPERIENCING MARINE RESERVES

EMR Kayak Safety Watch

Date: Location:

Minimum requirements	Equipment	Role
☐ Experienced kayaker - preferably seen in the field/role prior or relevant qualifications. ☐ Understanding of MTS event, systems and processes	☐ Fit for purpose kayak ☐ Needs to have fit for purpose PFD (person floatation device) ☐ Whistle ☐ Waterproof communication devices ☐ Personal sun protection - highly recommended ☐ Boogie board attached to the back of the kayak. ☐ equipment need to add illuminated large flag for night snorkelling	• To continually watch and respond to hand signals (non-urgent and emergency) from snorkellers, beach safety watch and event controller. • You may have to tow a participant or assist the group back to shore in the event of an emergency • Use communication devices to communicate your actions with the event controller

Emergency response briefing: Emergency signals and responses if groups are needing assistance

From	Urgent assistance	Non urgent assistance	Standard procedure
Snorkellers/ Participants	Waving one or both arms or drawing attention to themselves	Raising one arm with clenched fist	Participate in snorkel
Snorkel Guides/ Supervisors	Three whistle blasts	One whistle blast	Continue to supervise group
Event Controller or beach safety watch	Sound loud hailer siren for emergency recall	Comms via communication devices	Control and record number of participants in water. Activate emergency response from land when required
Kayak safety watch	Communicate to the event controller via whistle and/or communication devices. Paddle to leader - decide best course of action **Option A:** Guide swims the snorkeller back to shore, kayaker supports the rest of the group **Option B:** Safety kayaker assists snorkeller back to shore, guide stays with the group		Check for emergency signals as well as separation of snorkellers from the group, erratic movement, signs of distress.

Kayak Decision-Making: A decision will need to be made about if the snorkeller requires a buddy or if can be towed in on own. The remaining snorkel group will also need to be safely supervised. The supervisor may delegate supervision of the remaining group to another supervisor if ratio allows.

Emergency Actions — All Roles	I have received a kayak safety brief, understand my role and feel confident that I have the skills and fitness and I am able to undertake the responsibilities required.
• SEND FOR HELP — call 111 for ambulance, police, or fire. Ask for first response. • Check if AED is available in the registration tent • Advise emergency services of whereabouts using road name and location • Send someone to wait by road and direct emergency services to the scene • EMR event controller to contact emergency contact of participant, guide, or staff • event controller to complete incident report sheet • EMR event controller to notify Poutokomanawa / Co-Director (marine lead)	All EMR Kayak Safety watches to name & sign.

MOUNTAINS TO SEA CONSERVATION TRUST

2026 | EMR Kayak Safety Watch | 1

Operational limits - pre site update

In addition to our weather assessment and risk matrix - Final Operation Limits have been added to pre - site assessments.

RED - RISK LEVEL UNACCEPTABLE - EVENT WILL BE CANCELLED

Any one or combination of:

Heavy rain warning in place, rivers in or predicted to flood, gale force winds - windfall danger, unstable slips on route, extreme temperature.

ORANGE - RISK LIKELIHOOD IS ELEVATED - CAREFUL REASSESSMENT REQUIRED

Any one or combination of:

Heavy rain; high river levels, wet/slippery/windfall route conditions, cold temperatures <5oC

Careful reassessment of risks and consultation with group and team

GREEN - EVENT CAN PROCEED

Weather and other environmental conditions do not elevate the risk level.

2026 EMR Snorkel Pre-site Assessment.pdf
2026 EMR Advanced Snorkel Pre-site Assessment.pdf
2026 MTS Crew Pre-site Assessment.pdf
2026 WBC Pre-site Assessment.pdf

Industry Involvement

We have sought wider industry involvement by meeting with others in our industry. This included conversations with EONZ and the R Tucker Thompson and planned attendance at the Northland Aquatic Lunch Forum in 2026 which is organised by Sport Northland and involves industry leaders and representatives from various organisations involved in aquatic sports and water safety.

Review of other incidents relevant to our industry

Bland Bay (Whangaruru), New Year's Eve: A 46-year-old man, Daniel Allen, tragically died after going missing during a mid-morning snorkel. Despite a swift response by the coastguard and the Northland Rescue Helicopter, he could not be resuscitated. Dan was snorkelling alone, in front of his family bach. *Moe mai ra Dan (a personal friend of our Poutokomanawa)*.

https://www.nzherald.co.nz/northern-advocate/news/northland-snorkelling-tragedy-daniel-allens-adventurous-spirit-remembered/A7ON5JF7TVDMHDI3JZ2DPUCZ7A/

Guides and Resources

Natural Hazards

https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/adventure-activities/adventure-and-outdoor-recreation-activities-managing-the-risks-from-natural-hazards/

https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/get-ready/learn-about-hazards

Driving best practice

2026 MTS Resource - Driving Good Practice Guideline.pdf

Paperwork

Refer also to our Privacy Statement, Record keeping Policy and Privacy Guidelines

- ☐ It's Important to have H & S paperwork samples from every region
- ☐ Include paperwork from the day of incident with incident report as supporting documentation via activity log
- ☐ All H & S documentation should be uploaded to activity log or kept as a hard copy file by the coordinator or regional manager
- ☐ Event registrations are either kept in the event folder or as hard copies by the coordinator or regional manager
- ☐ Regional coordinators/managers to share 'free lessons' to team via meetings and online regional reporting (Regional coordinators/managers are cc'ed into free lesson and incident emails via H & S dashboard)
- ☐ Regional coordinators are responsible for collating H & S forms and including examples to the regional reports (digital or paper copies) from all programme coordinators and hold for 5 years

Internal audit record - higher risk activities focus (snorkelling)

A record it kept of all our visits and training in the regions

Waitapu Snorkel Day 2026.02.15	Lorna Doogan, Thalassa Kawachi, Jude Heath, Rosalie Bennett, Rick Field, Syd Eru,	EMR Audit	Completion of Peer Assessment for Thalassa and Overall event assessment - going through event gear and auditing first aid equipment	
Goat Island Snorkel Day - Regional Visit 7/03/2026	Lorna Doogan, Callum Long, Sophie Journée, Sophie Huang.	EMR Audit	Completion of Peer Assessment for Callum and Overall event assessment - going through event gear and auditing first aid equipment	https://photos.app.goo.gl/gqTUeW33CTCtfow5A 

Table 8. Internal audit visit records

Updates requiring MTS Crew attention

Action required

A summary and quick links to sections of this report that require action from coordinators.

Section/form	Action
Labelling	Heavy gear should also be labelled – heavy.
Pre site forms	Updated to include teacher contacts, coordinator contacts and emergency contact Further operational parameters have been developed also Simplified weather assessment
Event plan	Updated for better flow
Site Information Part 1 RAS	Supervision structure may need updating for different events at same site
Marine (EMR) SOP	RAS part 2 now at the end of EMR SOP (so does not have to be printed by coordinators but hard copy of SOP in beach box Reinstated 60 max participants in water for a community guided snorkel day with kayak watch and new kayak watch form Supervision structure guide added

New Snorkel Protocols for EMR	New night briefing snorkel checklist Max number for snorkel days
Endorsed coordinators	Training requirements for EMR. SSI Snorkel Instructor Course or NZQA 28391 & 28436 (formally 8296 and 4383) or existing divemaster or rescue diver or Basic PADI Freediver (all with EMR in water management training) ☐ Continued endorsement requires the coordinator to keep their first aid training current, keep a reasonable level of fitness (including pre-season fitness for EMR) , ensure compliance with our Safety Management Systems and procedures ☐ Continue police vetting and medical checks every 3 years.
Wananga attendance	☐ MTSCT highly recommends attendance at our national Mountains to Sea Wānanga at least once every three years (or participate in equivalent local training - covering in water management for EMR)
New kayak form	To be used when kayak safety used
Paperwork	☐ All H & S documentation should be uploaded to activity log or kept as a hard copy file by the coordinator or regional manager ☐ Event registrations are either kept in the event folder or as hard copies by the coordinator or regional manager
Landslides	Heightened awareness required for risk of landslides
Stream boxes	Must have hand sanitiser
First aid kits	Must be checked by regional coordinators - expired items replaced and check packaging sealed
Nominated Person – Lone Worker Emergency Procedure - replaces old field intentions form	Each region must have a documented nominated person field intention system. This must cover working alone or in pairs in a remote location with no shore/tent person.
New SOPS for WBC	Fish passage, SHMAK SOP, Inanga spawning SOP, Vessel under 5 m
Policy updates	New welling being policy Child protection policy - no transporting kids in coordinator cars Biosecurity policy Sanitisation policy

Beach box and grab bag	Beach box and grab bag requirements now defined of what needs to be in each
Documenting Your Supervision Plan	Your supervision plan should be documented and understood by the entire team on the day. This includes any changes in supervision between the planned activity and "free time." Your plan should also account for potential issues like leader fatigue, sudden illness, or injury. For your programmes and events, be sure to document your specific supervision plan, considering the unique needs of your participants, the activity, and the environment. For example, a group with challenging behavior may need additional teacher supervision, or a challenging marine environment might require more lead coordinators in the water.
River snorkelling SOP	Our River snorkelling SOP has been updated to clearly state that a site specific emergency plan must be included in event plan (in relation to the drift). Currently we require a safety kayak to drift along side the participants with comms to registration tent
Night snorkelling	Aluminated large flag to be towed behind kayak for night snorkels
Technical experts	Our very own Zoe Studd (MTSW) is now our internal H & S advisor, which enables her to delivery coordinator endorsement training and advise on H & S Sacha Williamson will audit our internal rescue training every 2 years
Tsunami risk	If working in a Tsunami zone - inform participants of evacuation plan - briefings updated for EMR
Coordinators to read	Driving safety 2026 MTS Resource - Driving Good Practice Guideline.pdf Managing risks from natural hazards https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/adventure-activities/adventure-and-outdoor-recreation-activities-managing-the-risks-from-natural-hazards/

Table 12. Action required from coordinators

Safety improvement plan

Translating some of the resources in Mandarin. Recording of briefing for high risk activities in Te Reo and Mandarin
Continue to Implement H & S updates and amendments communication using online google quiz - now compulsory for coordinator endorsement status.
Continue to Increase training opportunities for our volunteers and include rangatahi/taitamariki/youth.
Continue to use incident and free lesson recording and responding in Monday.com
Continue to produce H & S crew newsletters
Continue to use Docusign for contracts and new H & S agreements
Practise Tsunami evacuation if snorkelling in a Tsunami zone
Translate key field emergency scenarios (and steps) into a more manageable field guide to support field staff in the event of an emergency situation in the field
Further develop MTS crisis support and communications (internal escalation plan)
Work on a trial for different colour rash shirts

Table 13. Safety improvement plan

Appendix 1 | Summary of Amendments

Including but not limited to the following.

MTS SMP

Safety Management Plan (SMP) Version 15 - July 2026

- New H & S objectives
- Technical advisors session
- Incident investigation section
- Updated continued improvement
- National expansion info
- Incident investigation section
- All 2025 links updated with 2026 links
- Added managing natural hazards information
- Removed Serious Harm wording, changed to notifiable events
- Updated technical advisor section - Sacha to provide rescue training to coordinator trainers and internal audit of training every 2 years
- Safety goal changed to notifiable event
- Managing risks document added (page 43)
- Drugs and alcohol a stand alone policy - link only
- Page 53 updated and added qualworx, removed old infographic
- Driving good practice guided link added to appendix 5 with trailer policy as links

EMR SOP

Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR) snorkelling activity Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Manual, July 2026

A hard copy to be provided to all regions - 1 per trailer/beach box and additional copies on request for coordinator use

- Updated RAS part 1 and 2
- Updated coordinator training checklist
- Updated beach box and grab bag requirements - now needing binoculars !
- New Kayak form
- Updated pre site assessment
- Deleted intro section
- Quals section in SMP only
- Removed risk and hazards ID - as in SMP
- Deleted appendix 9, 10, 11, as in SMP
- Added requirement for site specific emergency plan for river snorkelling to be in event plan

Heavy gear should also be labelled – heavy.

WBC SOP

Whitebait Connection (WBC) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Manual, July 2026

Not subject to Adventure Activity Audit

- Updated RAS part 1 &2
- Updated WBC peer appraisal form
- Updated WBC coordinator training checklist
- Updated CBFM trainer induction checklist
- Fish passage assessment SOP created
- Īnanga Spawning Surveys SOP created
- Field intentions form has been archived and replaced by MTS nominated person - lone worker emergency procedure
- Motorised Vessel Under 6m SOP created
- Updated links
- Clarified Safety position statements

MTS

- Event plan updated
- PPE summary

Policy updates

- ➢ Child protection
- ➢ Sanitisation
- ➢ Biosecurity
- ➢ Wellbeing

Appendix 2 | Safety Position Statements - From EMR and WBC SOP Manuals

Programme	Topic	Statement
MTSCT	**Gazebo**	Gazebos supplied by MTS must be pegged down regardless of wind conditions (except indoors). Max wind for an erected gazebo is 20 knots; tie down to cars, trailers, or water-filled containers in winds over 15 knots. Never leave an erected gazebo unmanned — someone must be nearby and able to respond.

WBC	**Personal Flotation Device (PFD)**	A coordinator working alone (not a group activity) must wear a PFD/lifejacket when close to or in a waterway, even if shallow, in case of slipping and becoming unconscious. Lifejacket provided in coordinator's kit.
WBC	**Walking Pole**	Coordinators must use a walking pole on site recces near/in waterways or in dense, uneven vegetation, to test depth and detect obscured holes. A sturdy stick suffices. Unfamiliar participants (landowners, teachers) should also use one.
EMR	**Full Face Masks**	Full face masks are not permitted as of the 2017/18 season, due to H&S risk — the mask can be hard to remove when full of water.
MTSCT	**Antihistamine Administration**	Coordinators may carry over-the-counter antihistamine as a personal first aid item but must not administer any medication without specific written permission. Allergy/anaphylaxis info must be captured via pre-site assessment forms; check for an existing anaphylaxis action plan.
EMR	**Shark Policy**	Any shark 1.8m or larger (about human-sized) is considered potentially dangerous — any sighting at that size should prompt an orderly, immediate evacuation of the water per EMR evacuation protocol.

Appendix 3 | Evidence

Checklist of evidence for the health and safety annual audit

Samples of completed H & S forms	**All active regions - samples provided to the auditor**
Sample of induction evidence	Recent new coordinator
Internal annual audit - Peer appraisal	Meeting notes from national visits – H & S annual review. Pair appraisal
Coordinator meetings	See H & S committee and National coordinator meeting
External technical advice	See list of contributors in Annual Safety Report
Overlapping duties of care	Attach evidence sample
Top management approval	AGM minutes

Communication	See National meeting
Emergency practise and discussion	See regional internal H & S meetings sample
Incident record	See record of incidents
National provider agreements	See sample
Contract for Service	See sample school/provider agreement

Table 14. Evidence appendix