



IN CASE OF AN ACCIDENT

In New Zealand the back country is truly remote and usually you're the only ones there. If you have an immobilising accident it is quite possible no-one will pass by for weeks or months. The accepted practice in NZ is to carry a PLB on your person. (not in your boat) If you set the PLB off, the global Search and Rescue (SAR) system sets in motion a rescue operation. In NZ that usually means a helicopter will be despatched to your location within minutes, and it will have precise details of your location. Typically in reasonable weather and daylight, a helicopter with paramedic staff will be with you in about 1-2 hours.

Personal Locator Beacon Activation

There is no charge by SAR for a call-out, but if you have done something really dumb, expect to see your names in the news. That said, packrafters generally are equipped for both land and water routes to civilisation.

RIVER INFORMATION

We know New Zealand rivers, having paddled many of them.

There are some very useful links here.

- A guide to all NZ rivers <http://rivers.org.nz/nz>
- A topographic map and it's free <http://www.topomap.co.nz/>
- A packrafting trip website with valuable info specifically on packrafting some prime NZ rivers <http://www.packraftingtrips.nz/>
- Hiking info – in New Zealand it's called tramping. <https://tramper.nz/> Trails are called tracks in NZ.

NEW ZEALAND WEATHER

Weather rules in New Zealand. It changes very quickly and wind usually brings rain. All sensible outdoors people in NZ are switched on to weather patterns and will plan around weather. Take NZ weather lightly and you will regret it. Most rivers in NZ are rain fed. Rain in the headwaters can cause a river to rise in hours or even minutes from docile to raging. If it's really bad, it will get better. If it's really good, be watchful.

- Try www.yr.no and www.metservice.co.nz Note that the weather can change quickly in NZ.
- River flows – not every river has flow gauge data on line. <http://rivers.org.nz/> and go to the bottom R of the Home Page where there is a clickable map by region.
- The Department of Conservation manages most of the places you will want to explore. Hut and Track information by region is on their website.
- www.doc.govt.nz It is prudent to visit the local DoC office and ask about current conditions or tracks, bridges and huts. Note that there fees payable for DoC huts.
- <http://www.tramping.net.nz/huts/hut-fees>

SAFETY

You are renting some items of equipment. There is no responsibility on our part to guarantee your safety. It's no different in that respect from renting a car. The equipment will be in good condition and suitable for its purpose, which is to carry an active person and up to 40 kg of gear on still and moving water up to Grade 2 or 3 difficulty. Your safety depends on your skills, judgement and actions.

That said, we really want you to enjoy your packrafting experiences. There some basics that will help you do that.



Judgement Calls

It's hard to drown on dry land. If you find paddling scary or difficult, stop and rest, start walking on the track, or sit it out in camp or a hut. This can be floods, wind, or tiredness, or just out of your comfort zone. If you can't see down a rapid, it's so easy to hop out of a packraft and scout the rapid.

IF IN DOUBT, SCOUT

If you have any doubts about a river, lake or sea crossing, walk, don't paddle.

If you want to portage, don't let anyone talk you out of it. Packrafts are light and easy to carry around a rapid you don't wish to swim down. Ease of portaging is a major feature of packrafts.

Wind is a safety issue in New Zealand. Lakes and estuaries can become very scary places if the wind picks up. Wind causes waves and causes capsizes and can quickly separate you from your boat. Exercise judgement and caution.