



OUTDOOR SAFETY
NZ MOUNTAIN SAFETY COUNCIL



LAND SAFETY FORUM

Data Snapshot Report

June 2026

Purpose and Intended Use of this Report

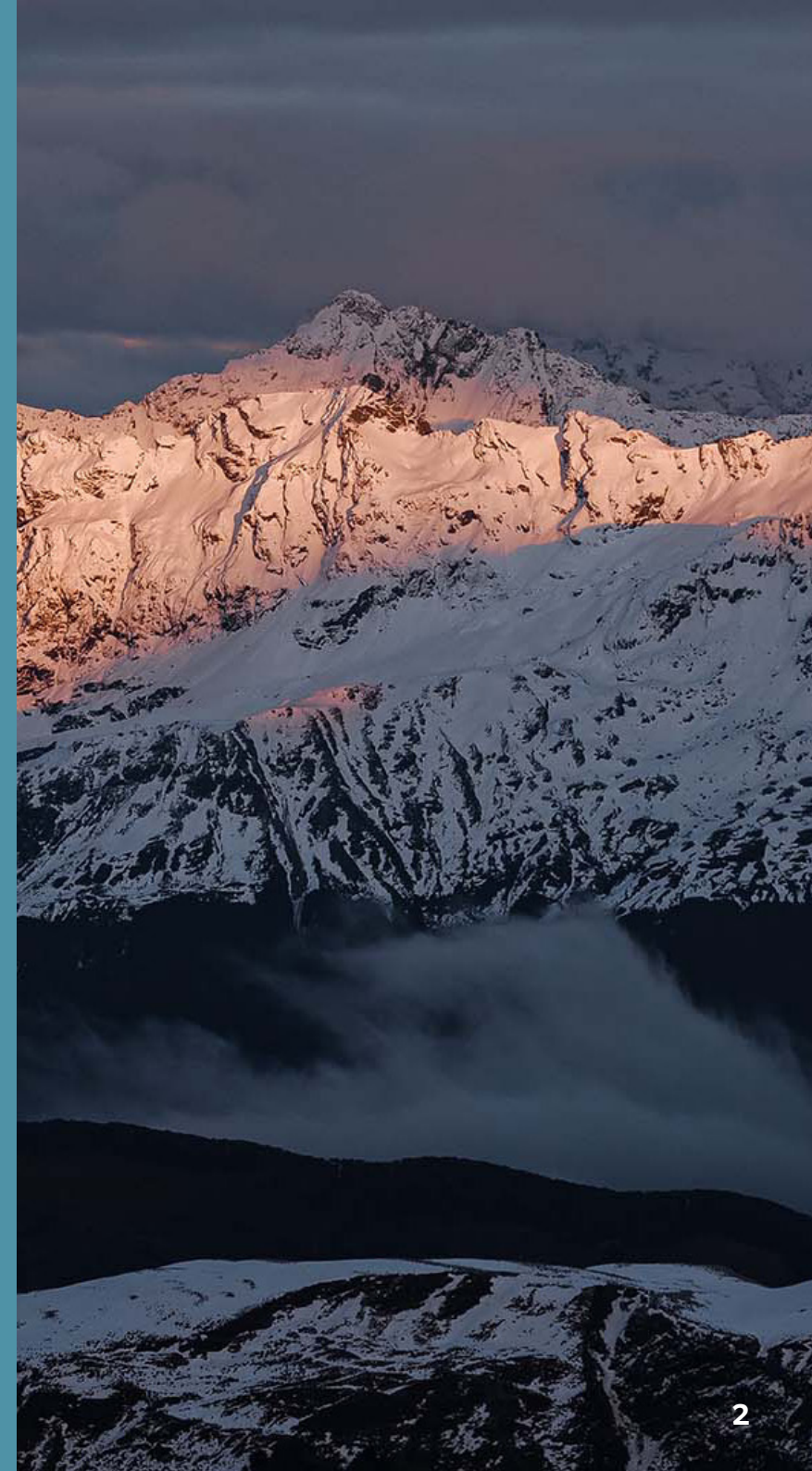
This data snapshot report has been developed by NZ Mountain Safety Council (MSC) for the members of the Land Safety Forum. The intention of the report is to provide an evidence-based foundation for informing current and future sector collaboration and prevention.

The report reflects a very small volume of the data and insights MSC has available. Organisations are encouraged to connect with MSC to explore specific interests they may have.

Any media queries relating to this report should be directed at MSC.

Any data or insights used from this report should be attributed to 'NZ Mountain Safety Council'.

For questions or feedback, please contact MSC on nathan.watson@mountainsafety.org.nz



Data & Methodology

The data used within this report is for the 15-year period from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2025, unless otherwise stated.

The incident and participation data is sourced via the following MSC partners:

INJURIES Accident Compensation Corporation	SEARCH & RESCUE NZ Police, Rescue Co-ordination Centre NZ, St John Hato Hone	FATALITIES Ministry of Justice Coronial Services Unit
DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIPS Sport NZ Active NZ Survey	INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment International Visitor Survey	

MSC collates the data, which is then reviewed and if needed data cleansing and verification is conducted. For example, this includes checking that the activity has been assigned correctly, adjusting incident locations where there are errors, and removing incidents that are not applicable to land-based outdoor recreation.

The data excludes incidents that are known medical events, such as heart attacks. All cases of dementia, wanderers, and urban searches for lost or missing persons are excluded.

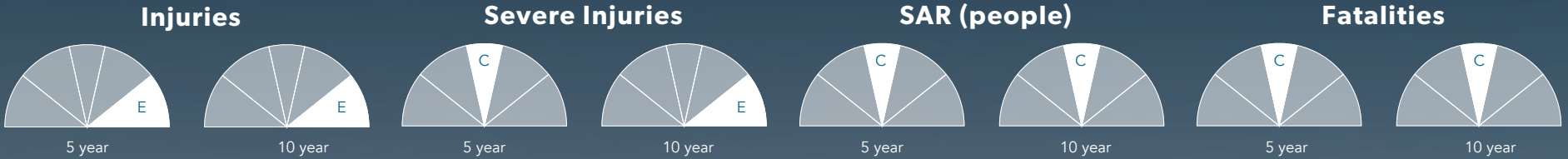
Hunting includes all types of recreational hunting, such as big game, alpine, game bird and pig. Tramping includes all walking, hiking and trekking in the outdoors, such as on Public Conservation Land or Regional Parks. Tramping excludes urban parks or walking in urban areas. Mountaineering includes climbing in alpine areas. Usually, this would require equipment that would not normally be needed when tramping, such as an ice axe, crampons, or ropes. Mountaineering can take place during summer or winter. Popular mountaineering areas include Taranaki Maunga, Mt Ruapehu, Aoraki/Mt Cook, The Remarkables, Mt Rolleston, Tititea/Mt Aspiring.

Summary

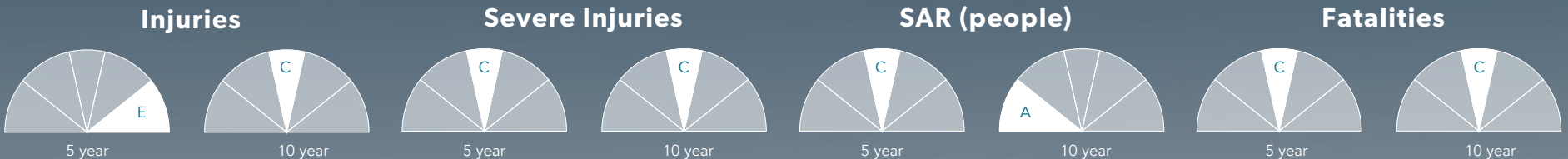
This page presents the 5 and 10-year trends for injuries, serious injuries, search & rescues and fatalities, for the three primary activities included in the report. To calculate these trends, we have created five tiers. The framework assumes a 1% annual increase as a baseline to account for population growth. In all cases the difference is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level

A SUBSTANTIALLY DECREASING decreased by at least 3% per year	B DECREASING decreased by at least 1% per year	C NO CHANGE between -1% and 3% per year or not statistically significant	D INCREASING increased by at least 3% per year	E SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASING increased by at least 5% per year
--	--	--	--	--

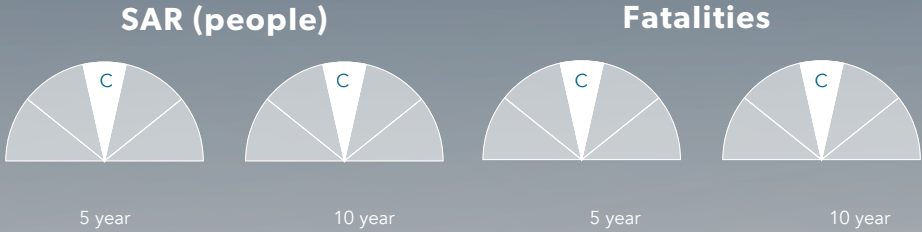
TRAMPING



HUNTING



MOUNTAINEERING



SECTION ONE

National Trends and Rates

At a macro level, these provide a broad picture of the overall trend of annual safety incidents and how they're changing over time.

The three primary land-based outdoor recreation activities highlighted here have been chosen as they represent most participation and safety incidents.



Tramping

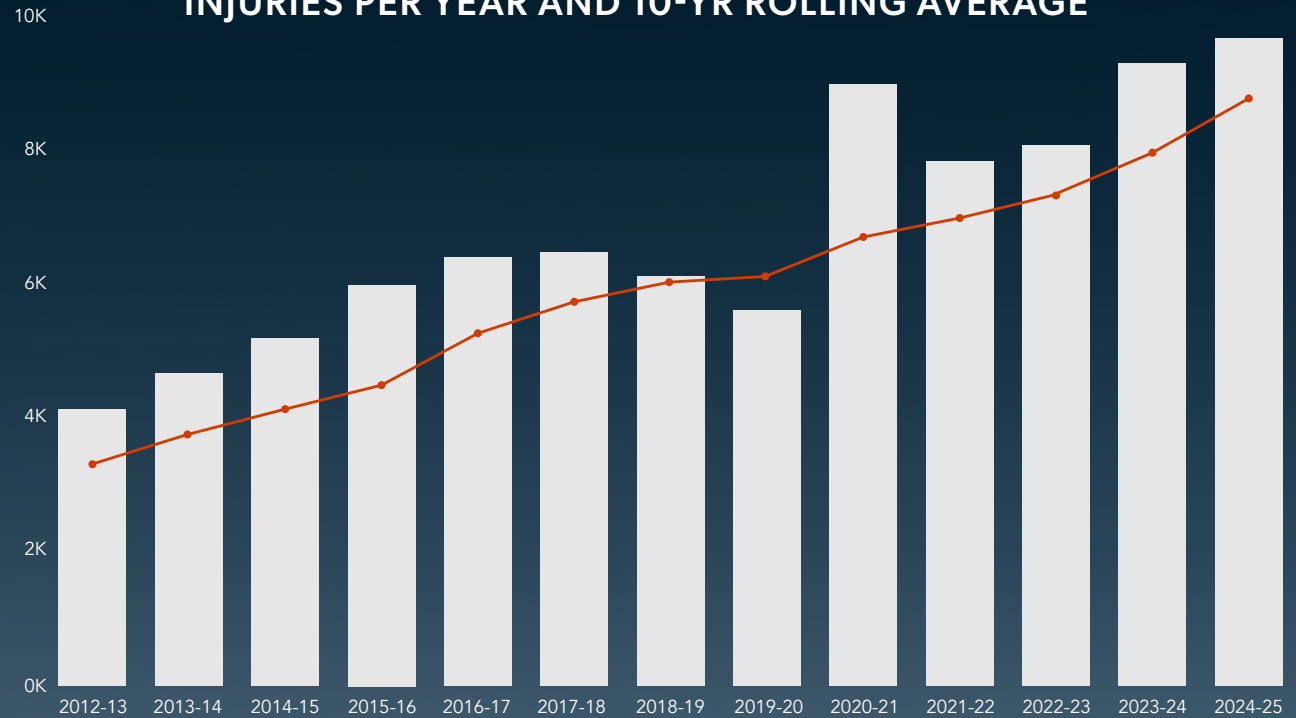
Tramping injuries include a broad range of injury type, body location, and severity.

When considering injuries it's helpful to view 'all injuries' and only those classified as 'severe'.

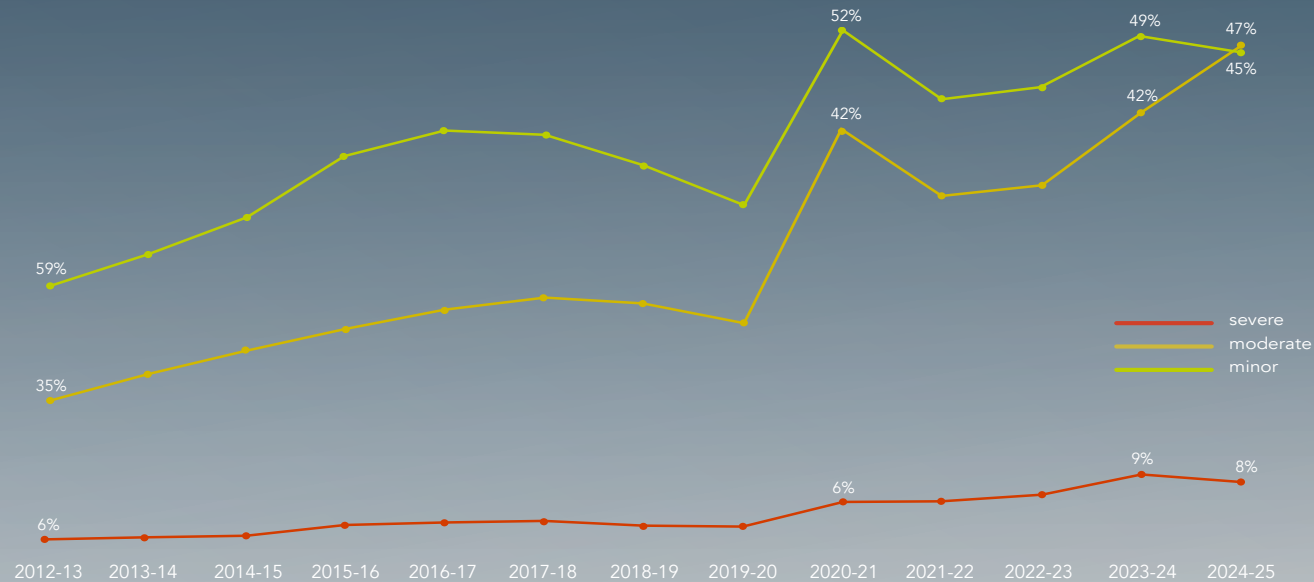
Severe injuries represent safety incidents that have a far greater impact on the person involved, their family and community. These severe injuries are not necessarily search and rescue events.

Both the decrease in tramping injuries in 2019-2020, and the sharp rise in 2021-2022, can be attributed to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

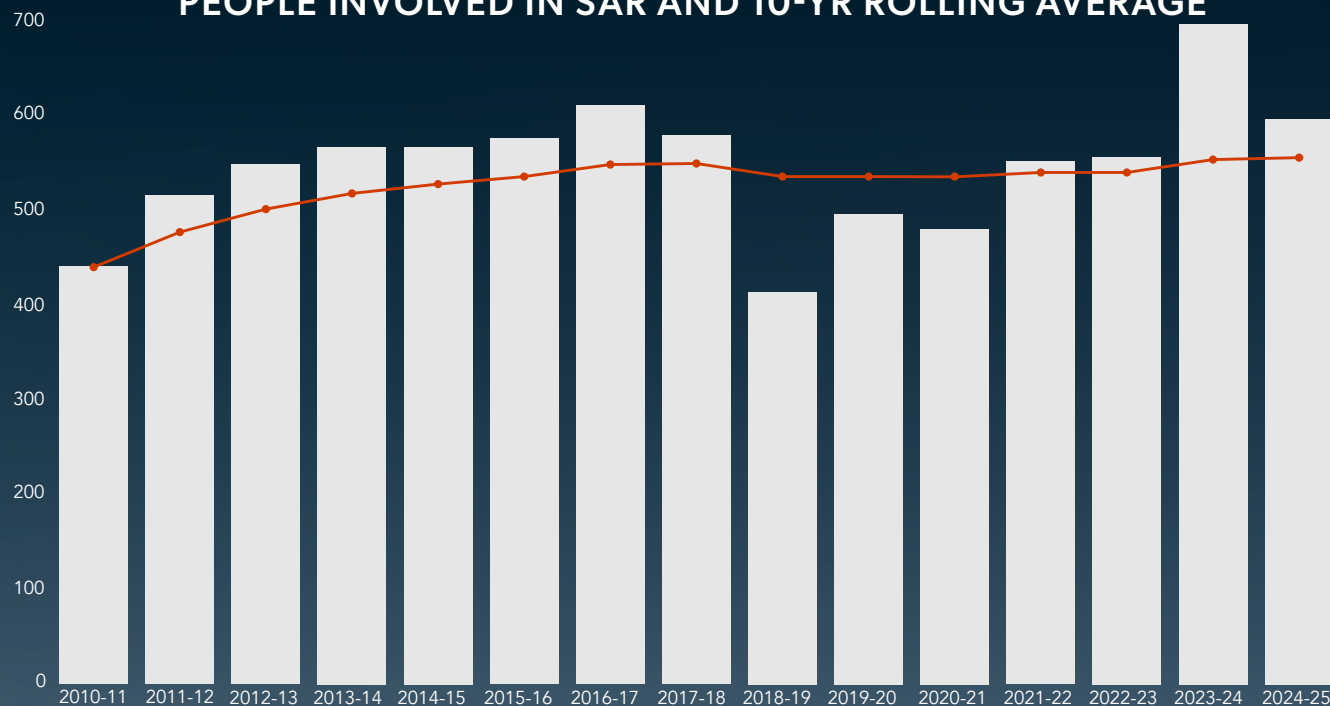
INJURIES PER YEAR AND 10-YR ROLLING AVERAGE



INJURY BY SEVERITY TYPE



PEOPLE INVOLVED IN SAR AND 10-YR ROLLING AVERAGE

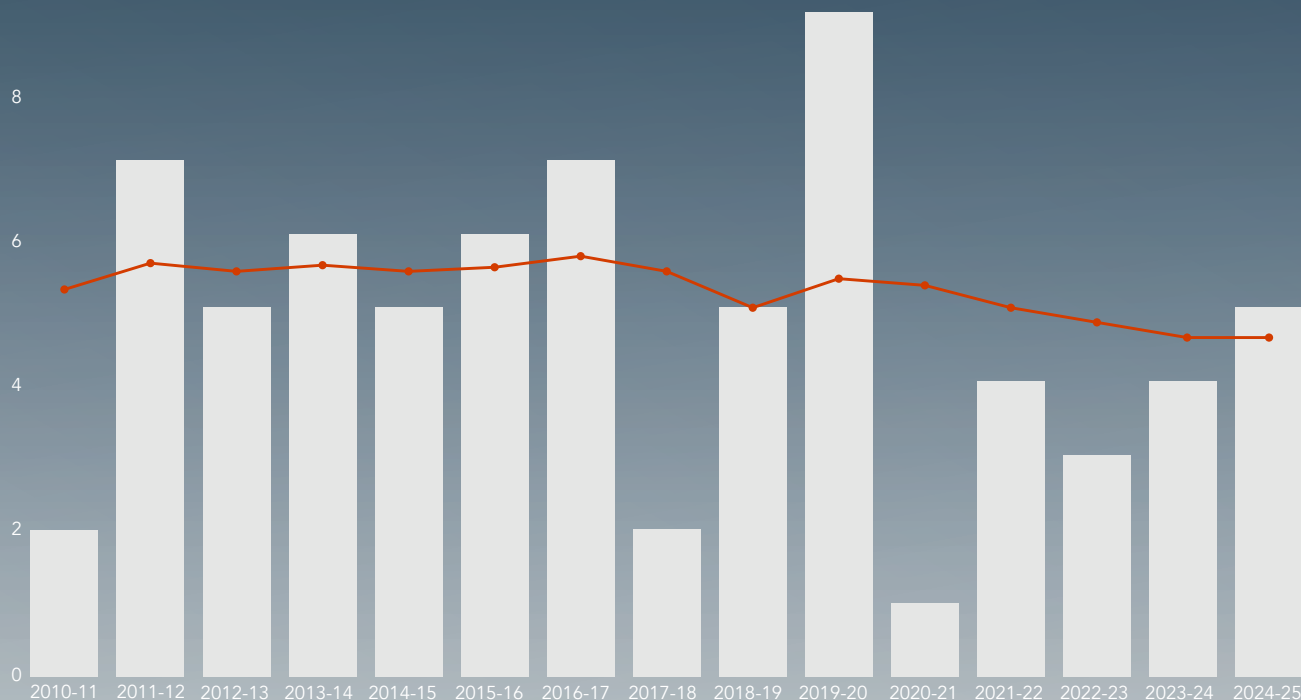


Using the 10-year rolling trend, Tramping SAR events remain largely stable in recent years, with a slight increase over the full 15 years.

The rolling trend helps to balance out the highs and lows, which in this case have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and implementation of the sar'donyx database in 2019.

With only a small number of fatalities per year there is inevitably annual highs and lows, however the 10-year rolling trend indicates an overall decreasing (improving) picture.

FATALITIES PER YEAR AND 10-YR ROLLING AVERAGE



Hunting

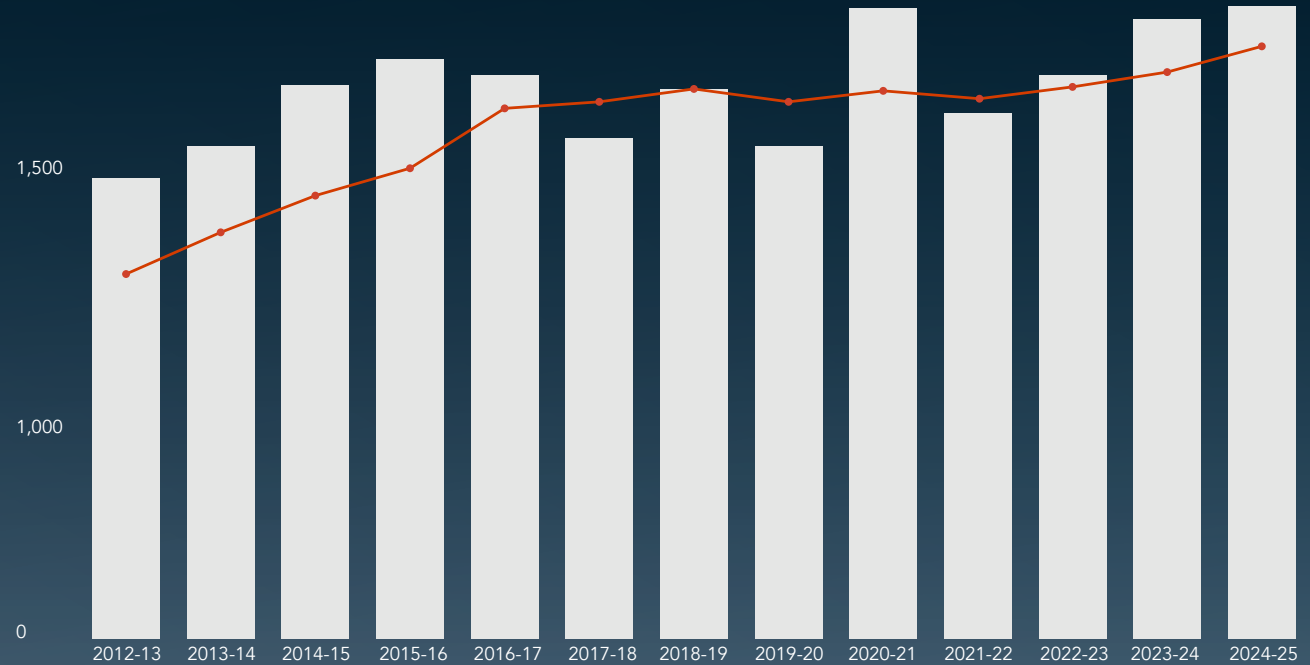
Hunting injuries include a broad range of injury type, body location, and severity.

When considering injuries it's helpful to view 'all injuries' and only those classified as 'severe'.

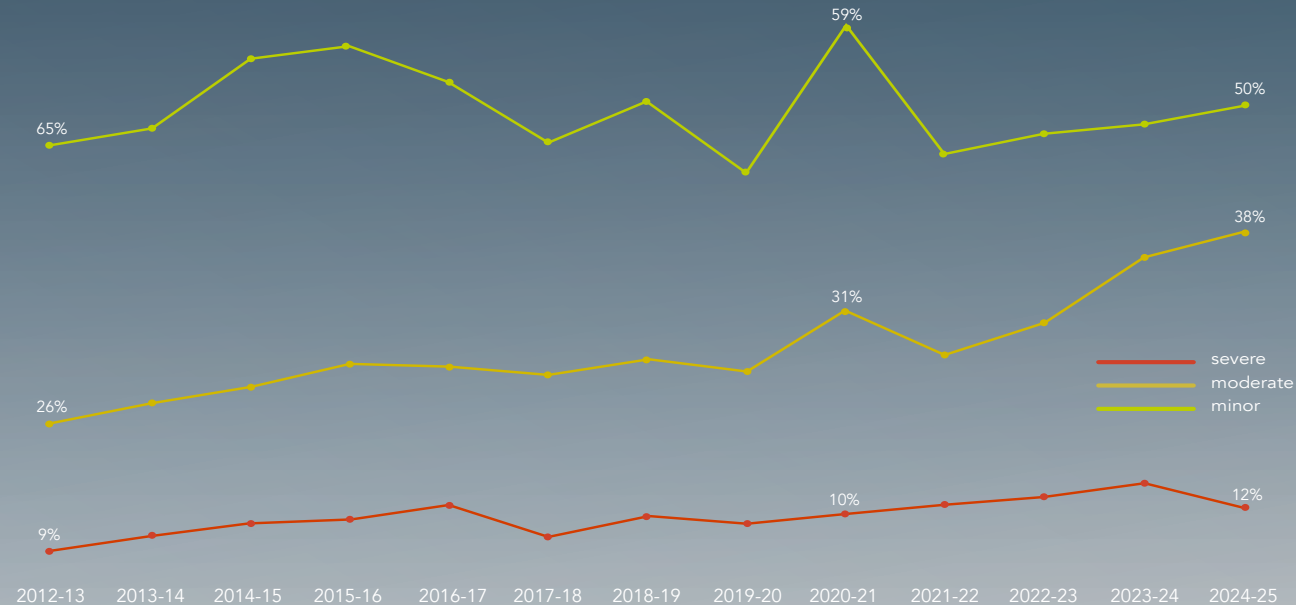
Severe injuries represent safety incidents that have a far greater impact on the person involved, their family and community. These severe injuries are not necessarily search and rescue events.

The three most common severe injury sites on a hunter are the knee (26%), shoulder (14%) and ankle (11%).

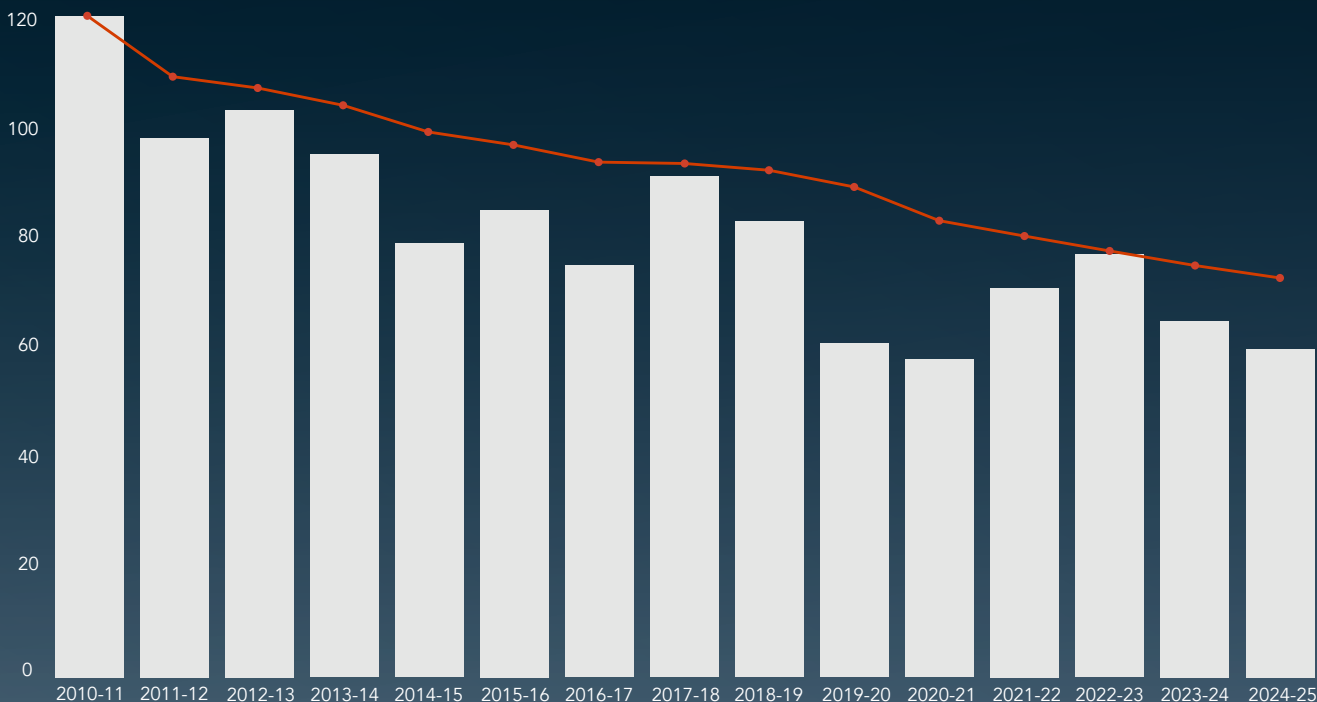
INJURIES PER YEAR AND 10-YR ROLLING AVERAGE



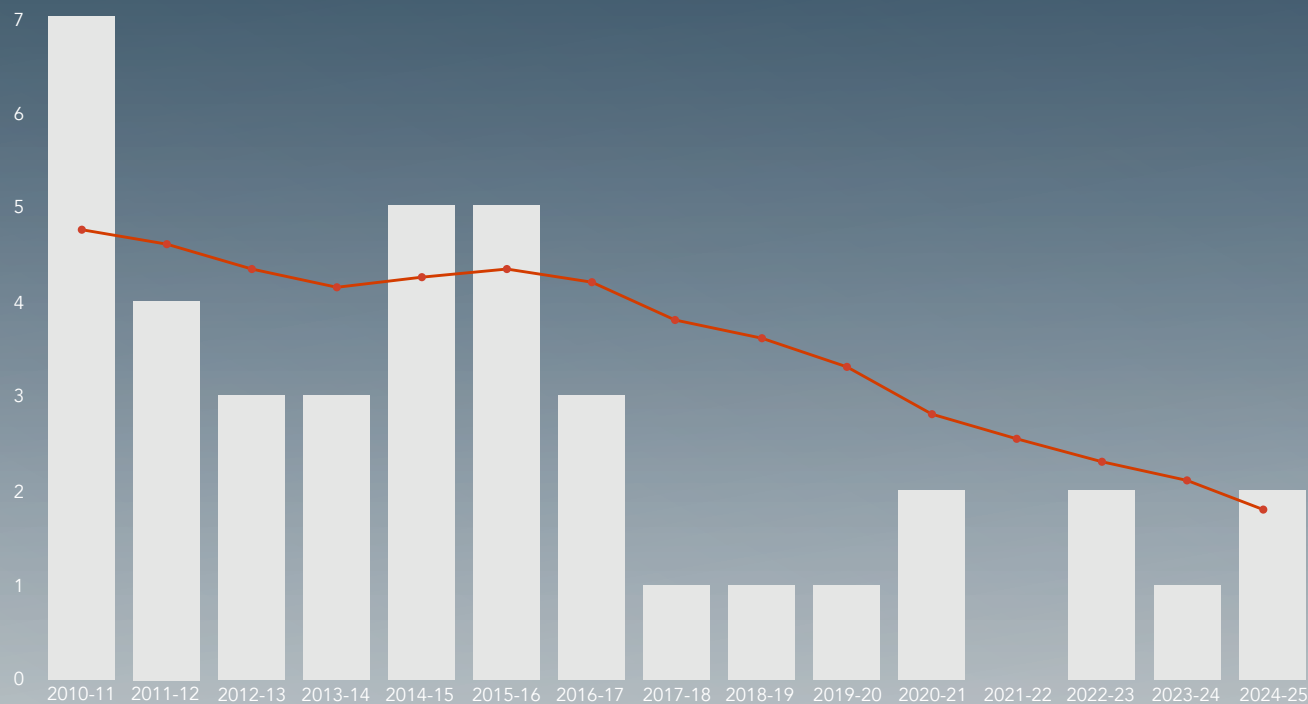
INJURY BY SEVERITY TYPE



PEOPLE INVOLVED IN SAR AND 10-YR ROLLING AVERAGE



FATALITIES PER YEAR AND 10-YR ROLLING AVERAGE



While there's a visible decrease in hunting SAR and fatalities, this is set against a backdrop of decreasing participation, however, we don't yet know to what degree that is a factor.

Mountaineering

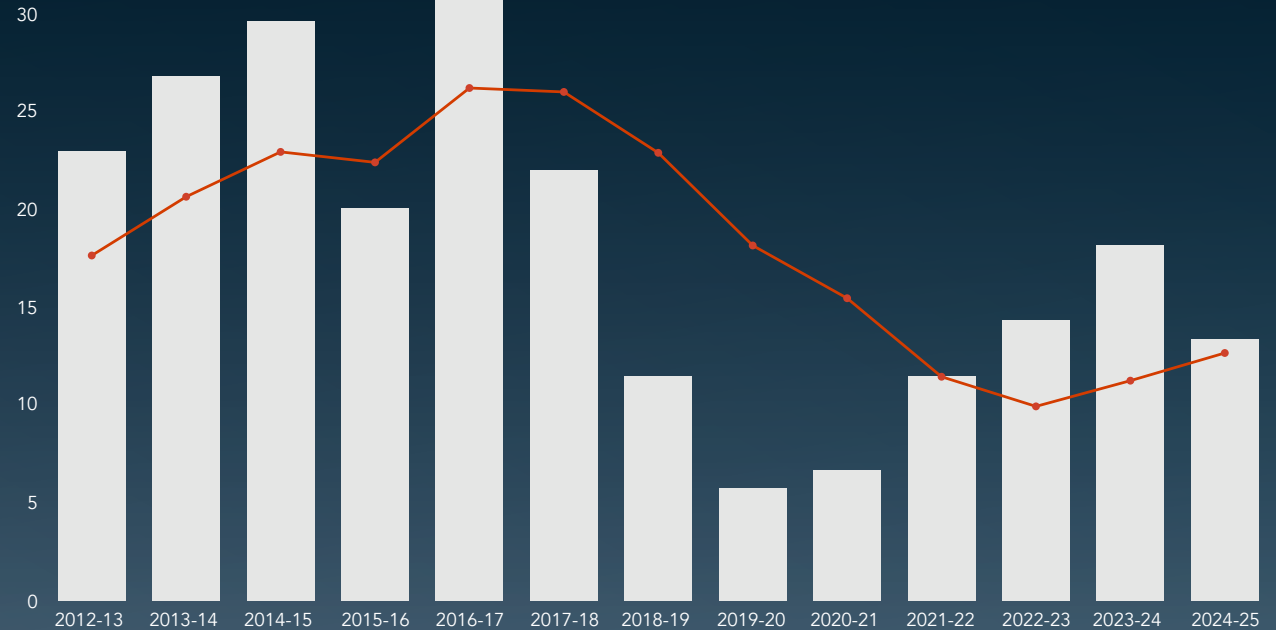
As with tramping and hunting, mountaineering injuries include a broad range of injury type, body location, and severity.

When considering injuries it's helpful to view 'all injuries' and only those classified as 'severe'.

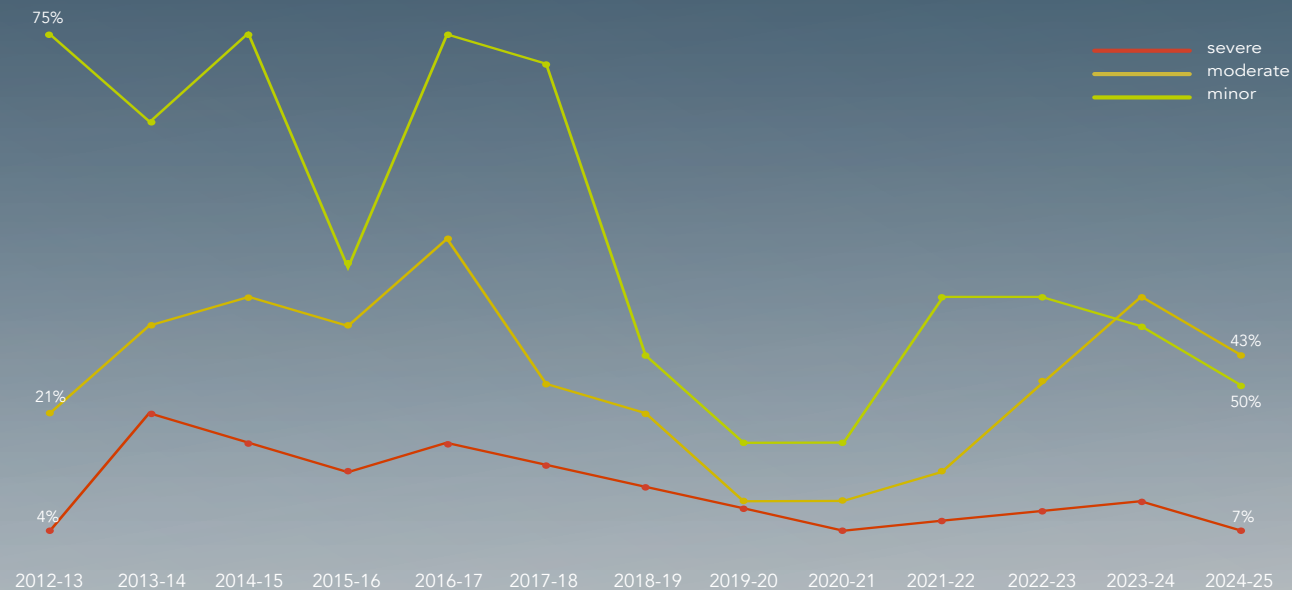
Severe injuries represent safety incidents that have a far greater impact on the person involved, their family and community. These severe injuries are not necessarily search and rescue events.

47% of all severe mountaineering injuries involve a fracture or dislocation. This is a significantly higher percentage than tramping or hunting.

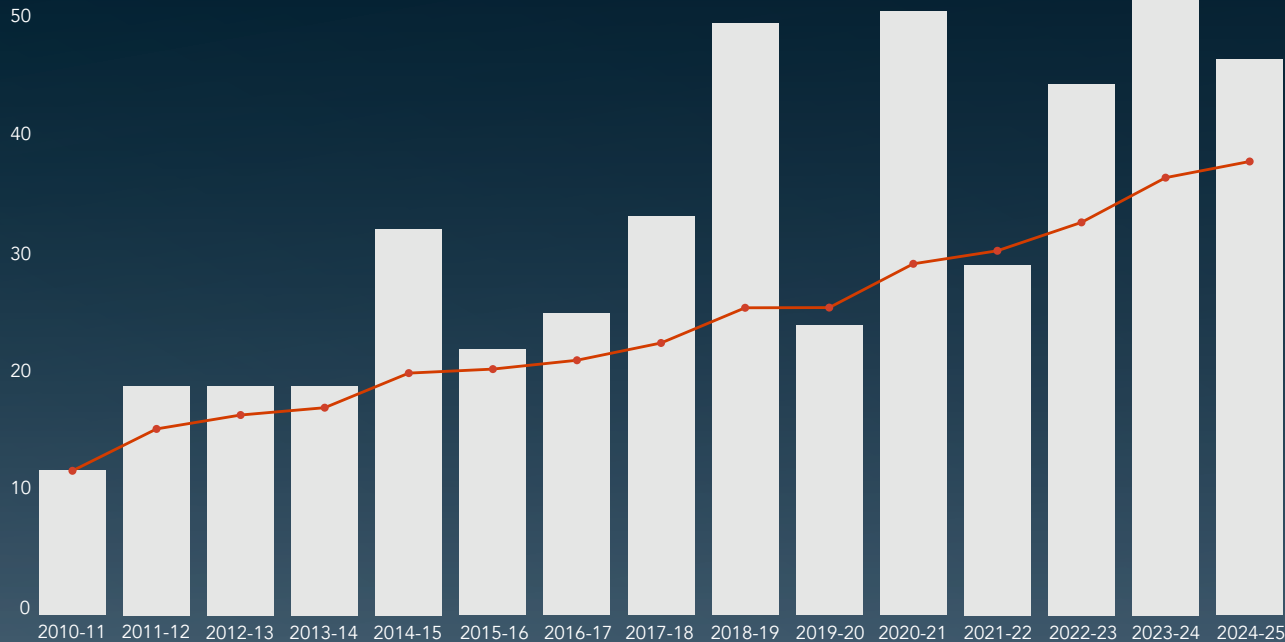
INJURIES PER YEAR AND 10-YR ROLLING AVERAGE



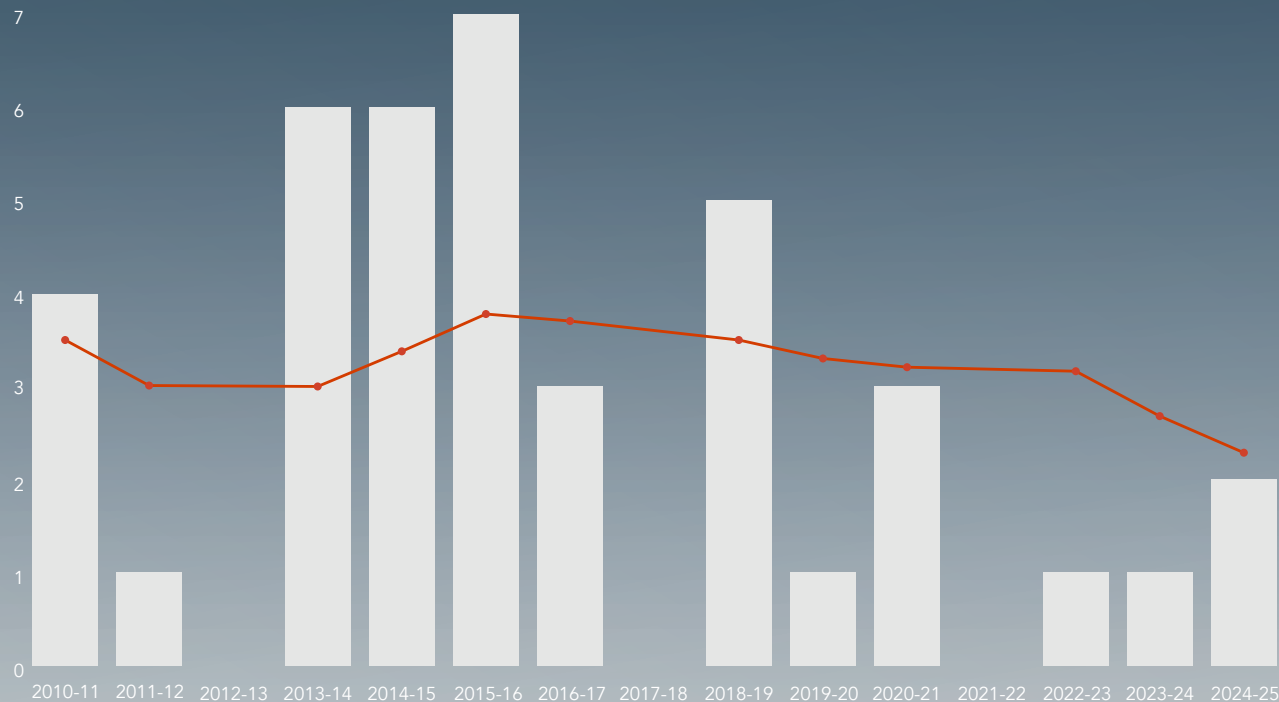
INJURY BY SEVERITY TYPE



PEOPLE INVOLVED IN SAR AND 10-YR ROLLING AVERAGE



FATALITIES PER YEAR AND 10-YR ROLLING AVERAGE



The dramatic increase in mountaineering SAR over the last 15 years is worthy of special attention, however, without clear participation data it's impossible to fully understand what's driving this trend.

SECTION TWO

Participation & Incident Rates

Using the participation data available, we can quantify the rate of safety incidents.

Currently this is only possible for activities included in the Sport NZ Active NZ survey; tramping and hunting. Mountaineering has been added, but those results will not be available until 2027.

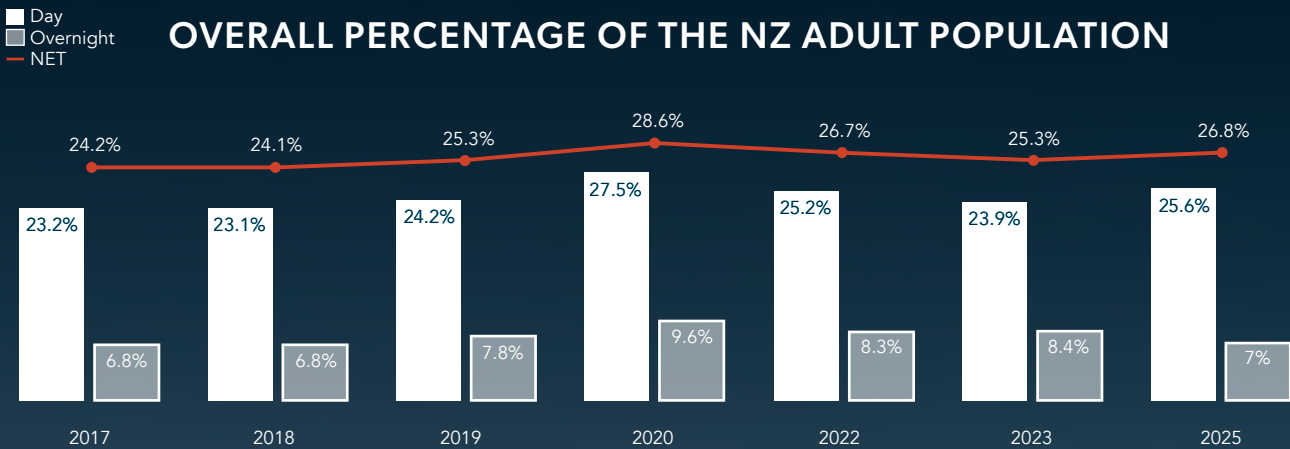
Hunting for international participants is not included as there is no way to exclude hunters who have paid to hunt with a guide or in a private hunting block, and the number of purely recreational international hunters is not possible to define within the data.



Tramping Participation

Before we quantify incident rates, we need to understand participation. Here, we explore domestic participation for people aged 18yrs and over.

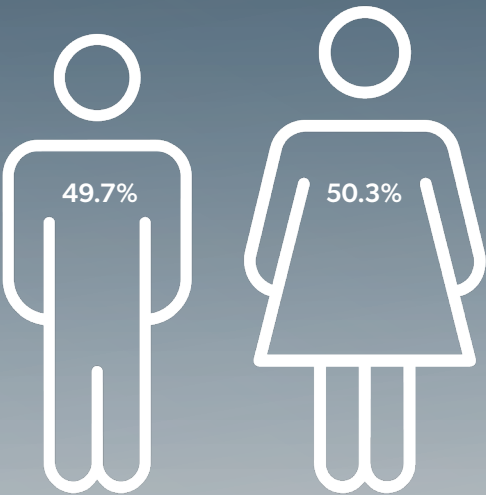
In 2025, an estimated 1,045,000 NZ adults went tramping.



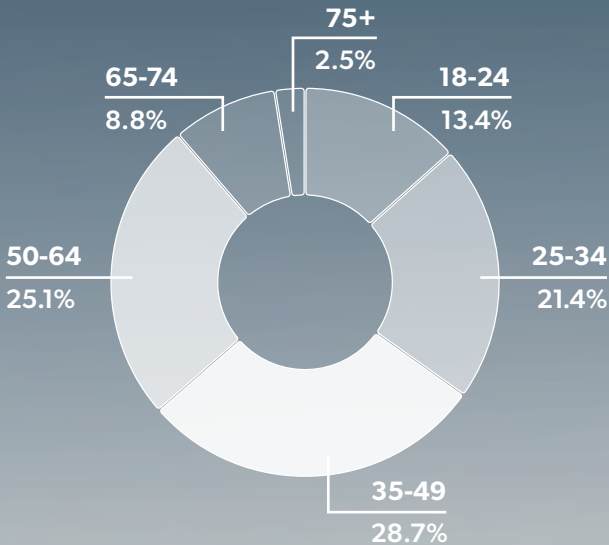
ETHNICITY



GENDER



AGE



Hunting Participation

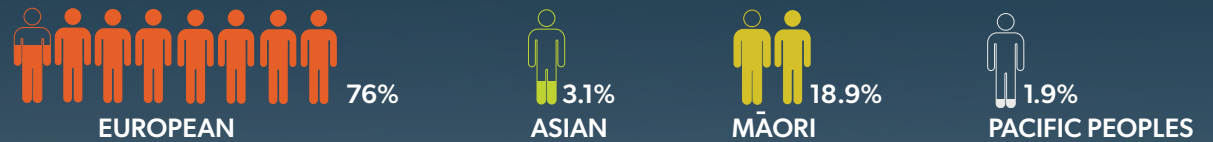
Before we quantify incident rates, we need to understand participation. Here, we explore domestic participation for people aged 18yrs and over.

Adult hunting participation continues to slowly decline, in 2025 an estimated 152,000 NZ adults participated.

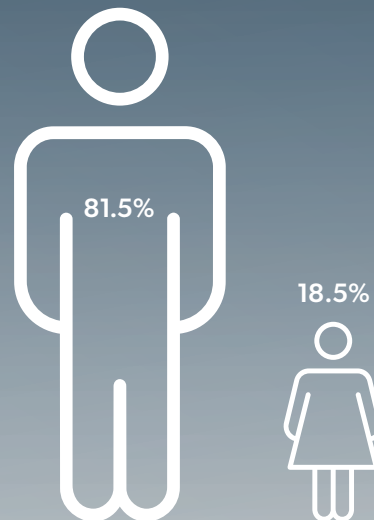
OVERALL PERCENTAGE OF THE NZ ADULT POPULATION



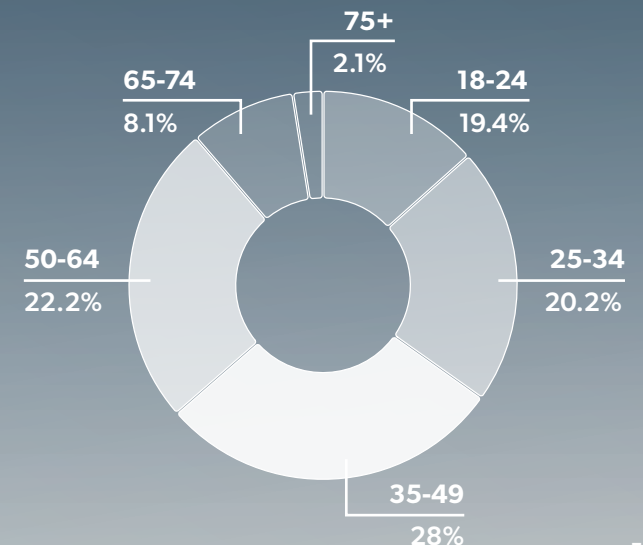
ETHNICITY



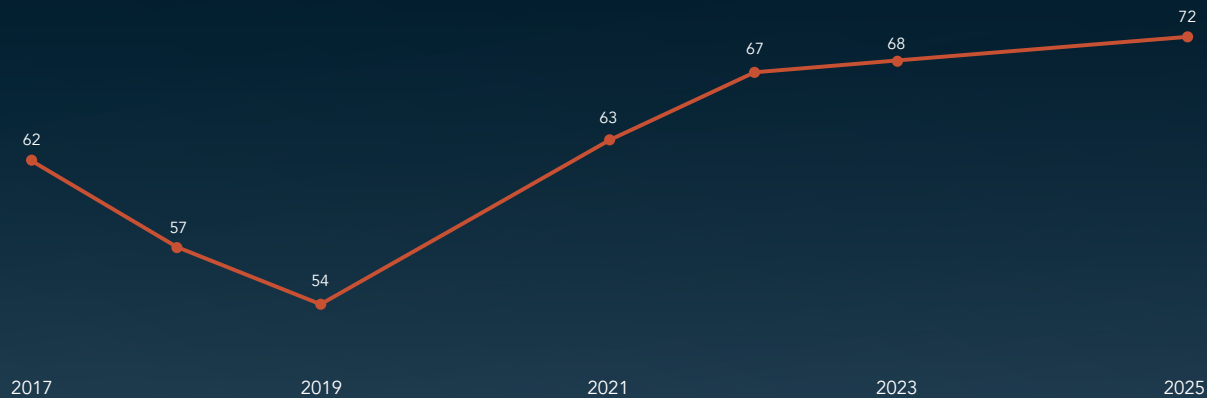
GENDER



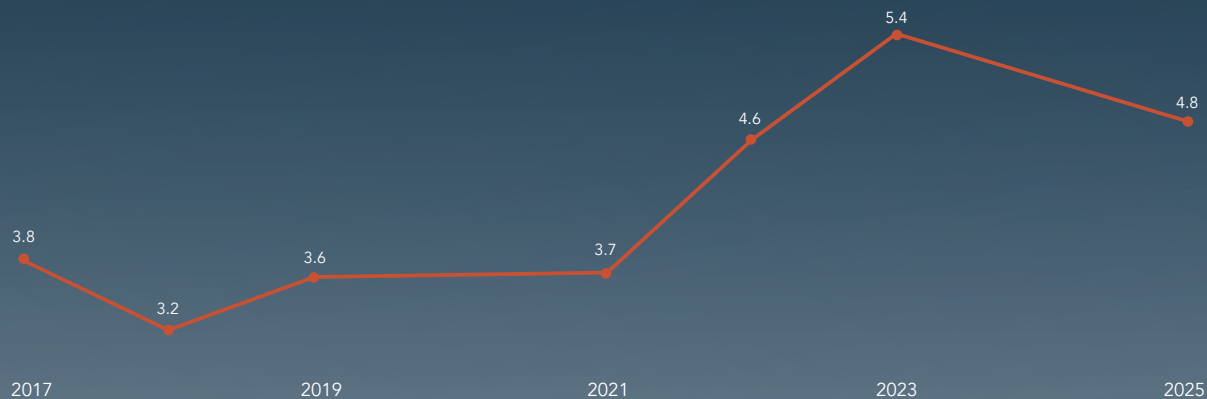
AGE



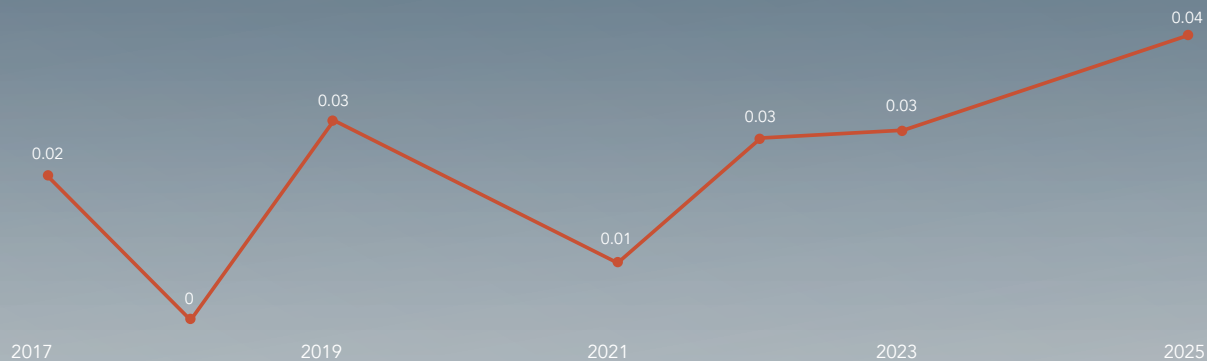
SEVERE INJURIES PER 10,000 PARTICIPANTS PER YEAR



SAR EVENTS PER 10,000 PARTICIPANTS PER YEAR



FATALITIES PER 10,000 PARTICIPANTS PER YEAR



Tramping Incident Rates

We can only calculate the rate for years that coincide with an Active NZ Survey, thus excluding 2020 and 2024. These rates currently only apply to New Zealanders.

Here we see very small increases in the incident rates.

SECTION THREE

Geographic Locations

The location of safety incidents is an essential element.

Understanding 'where' provides essential context about the user journey, behaviour, and implementing evidence-based prevention.

For locations, there are several geospatial views that can be applied. Often, this can be limited by the data source, for example injuries are only as granular at the territorial local authority (district), for search and rescues and fatalities we can typically identify the specific position, allowing those to be mapped to conservation areas or regional parks.

MSC's preferred category is to use hotspots. These represent areas where search and rescues and fatalities are highly concentrated. To develop these, we use a model that factors in density and proximity and removes human bias or human-made elements such as access points, parking, huts and tracks. These hotspots are named to reflect the geographic area.



Tramping Hotspots

(1 July 2011 - 30 June 2026)

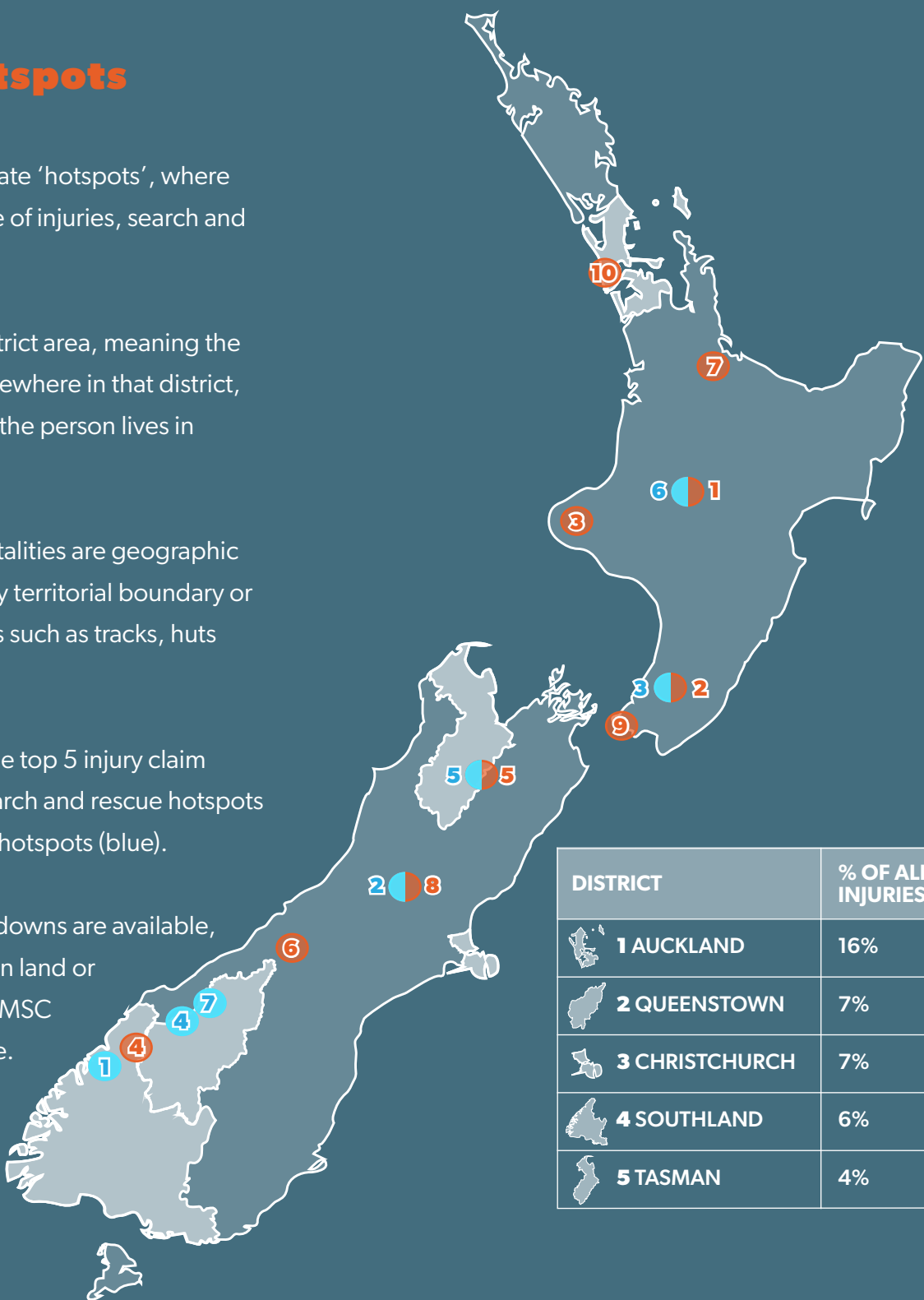
These map locations indicate ‘hotspots’, where we see the highest volume of injuries, search and rescues, and fatalities.

Injuries are limited to a district area, meaning the injury either occurred somewhere in that district, or if that is unknown, then the person lives in that district.

Search and rescues and fatalities are geographic hotspots not limited by any territorial boundary or human-influenced features such as tracks, huts or access.

On this map we present the top 5 injury claim districts (white), top 10 search and rescue hotspots (orange) and top 7 fatality hotspots (blue).

Further geographic breakdowns are available, such as public conservation land or regional parks. Please ask MSC if you’re interested in these.



DISTRICT	% OF ALL INJURIES
1 AUCKLAND	16%
2 QUEENSTOWN	7%
3 CHRISTCHURCH	7%
4 SOUTHLAND	6%
5 TASMAN	4%

FATALITY HOTSPOTS	# OF FATALITIES
1 MILFORD	8
2 ARTHUR’S PASS	6
3 TARARUA	5
4 EAST MATUKITUKI - UPPER WILTON	4
5 NELSON LAKES	4
6 TONGARIRO	3
7 WILKIN-YOUNG	3

SAR HOTSPOTS	% OF INCIDENTS
1 TONGARIRO	16%
2 TARARUA	8%
3 TARANAKI	6%
4 HUMBOLDT	4%
5 NELSON LAKES	4%
6 AORAKI	4%
7 KAIMAI	4%
8 ARTHUR’S PASS	4%
9 WELLINGTON	3%
10 WAITAKERE	3%

Hunting Hotspots

(1 July 2011 - 30 June 2026)

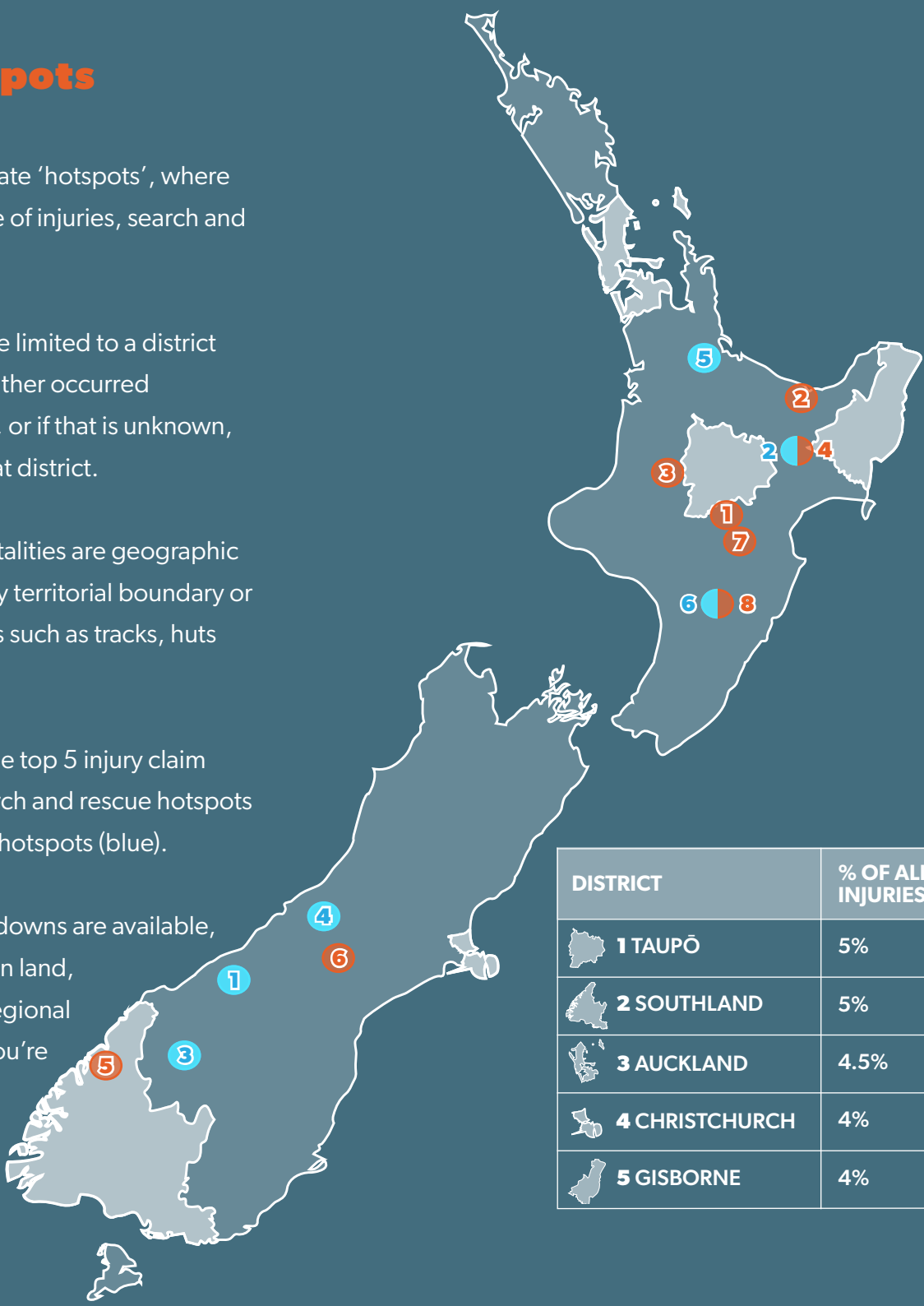
These map locations indicate ‘hotspots’, where we see the highest volume of injuries, search and rescues, and fatalities.

Please note that injuries are limited to a district area, meaning the injury either occurred somewhere in that district, or if that is unknown, then the person lives in that district.

Search and rescues and fatalities are geographic hotspots not limited by any territorial boundary or human-influenced features such as tracks, huts or access.

On this map we present the top 5 injury claim districts (white), top 8 search and rescue hotspots (orange) and top 6 fatality hotspots (blue).

Further geographic breakdowns are available, such as public conservation land, hunting permit areas, or regional parks. Please ask MSC if you’re interested in these.



FATALITY HOTSPOTS	# OF FATALITIES
1 HAAST	2
2 UREWERA	2
3 WAKATIPU	2
4 WESTLAND	2
5 KAIMAIS	1
6 RUAHINES	1

SAR HOTSPOTS	% OF INCIDENTS
1 KAIMANAWAS	12%
2 EASTERN BAY OF PLENTY	9%
3 PUREORA/ TONGARIRO	9%
4 UREWERAS	7%
5 FIORDLAND	6%
6 INLAND SOUTH CANTERBURY	6%
7 KAWEKAS	6%
8 RUAHINES	6%

DISTRICT	% OF ALL INJURIES
1 TAUPŌ	5%
2 SOUTHLAND	5%
3 AUCKLAND	4.5%
4 CHRISTCHURCH	4%
5 GISBORNE	4%

Mountaineering Hotspots

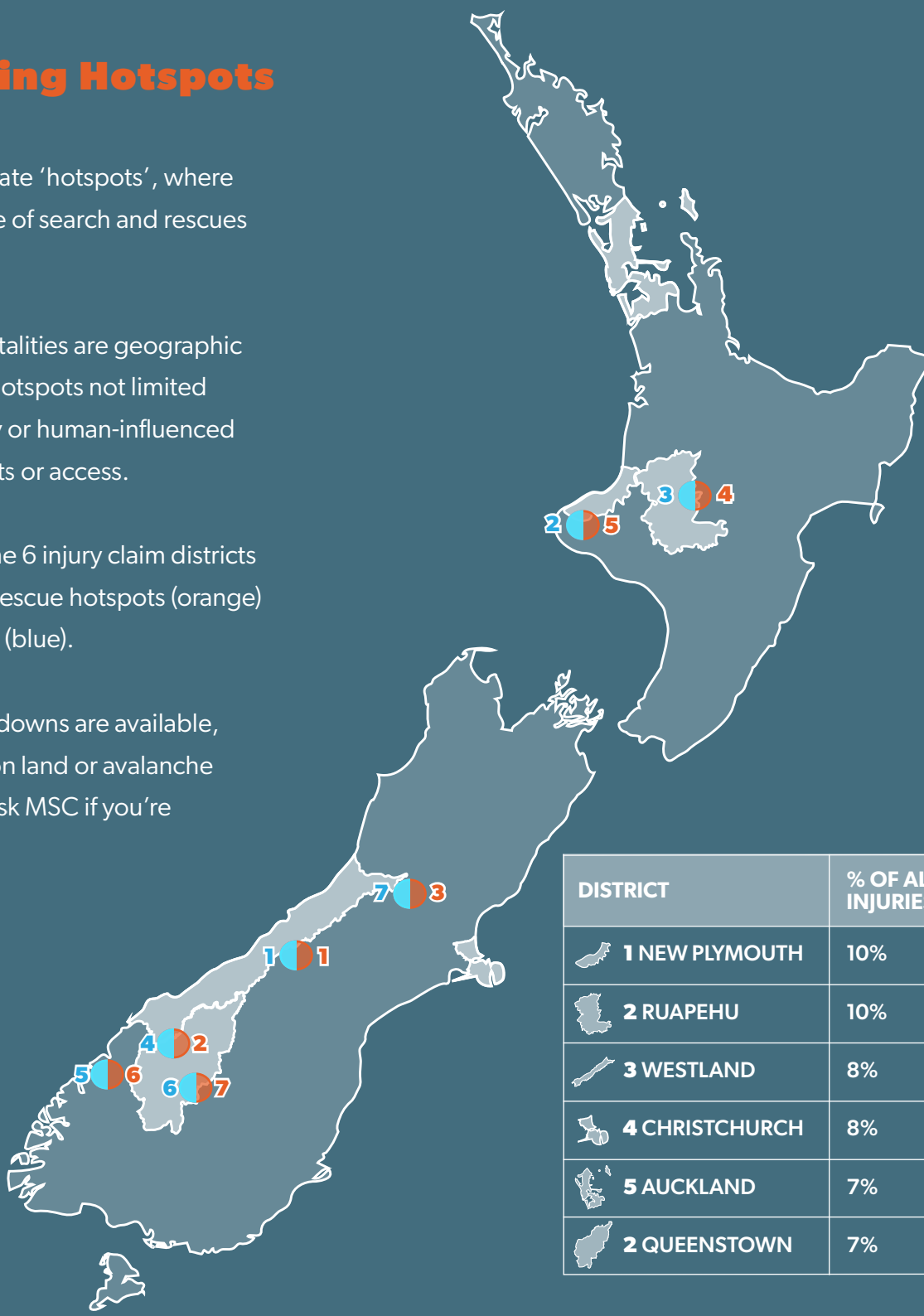
(1 July 2011 - 30 June 2026)

These map locations indicate 'hotspots', where we see the highest volume of search and rescues and fatalities.

Search and rescues and fatalities are geographic mountaineering areas or hotspots not limited by any territorial boundary or human-influenced features such as tracks, huts or access.

On this map we present the 6 injury claim districts (white), top 7 search and rescue hotspots (orange) and top 7 fatality hotspots (blue).

Further geographic breakdowns are available, such as public conservation land or avalanche advisory regions. Please ask MSC if you're interested in these.



DISTRICT	% OF ALL INJURIES
1 NEW PLYMOUTH	10%
2 RUAPEHU	10%
3 WESTLAND	8%
4 CHRISTCHURCH	8%
5 AUCKLAND	7%
2 QUEENSTOWN	7%

FATALITY HOTSPOTS	# OF FATALITIES
1 AORAKI	16
2 TARANAKI	7
3 RUAPEHU	3
4 ASPIRING	2
5 FIORDLAND	2
6 REMARKABLES	1
7 ARTHUR'S PASS	1

SAR HOTSPOTS	% OF INCIDENTS
1 AORAKI	41%
2 ASPIRING	19%
3 ARTHUR'S PASS	10%
4 RUAPEHU	9%
5 TARANAKI	8%
6 FIORDLAND	8%
7 REMARKABLES	6%

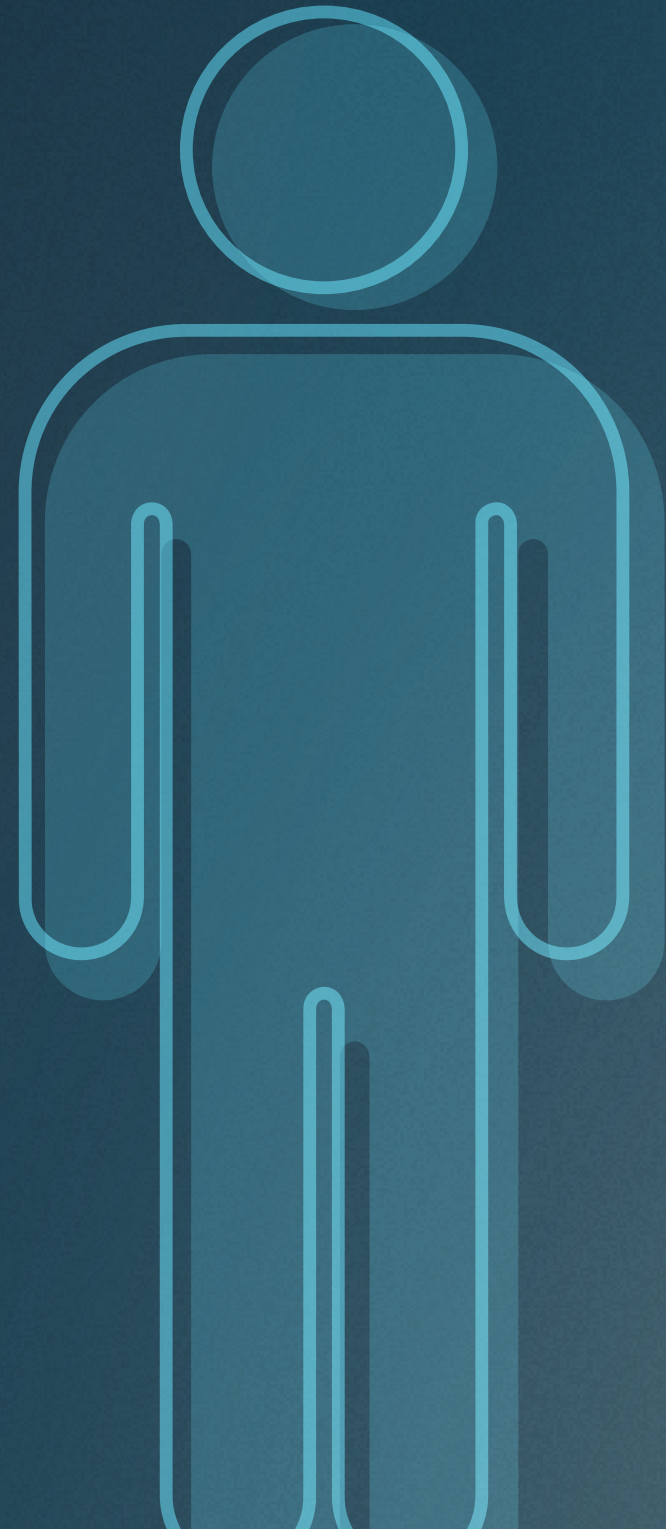
SECTION FOUR

DEMOGRAPHICS

Understanding 'who' is involved is also an essential element. This provides essential context regarding the participants getting into trouble and their behavior. It also allows for highly targeted evidence-based prevention.

Other than the fatality data, we cannot identify an individual person.

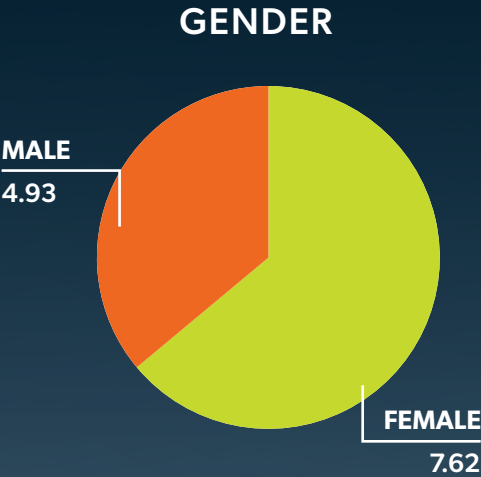
Since the implementation of the SAR'donyx database the availability of demographic data relating to search and rescue events has significantly decreased, to the point that there is insufficient data to use. This is a significant concern and needs to be addressed.



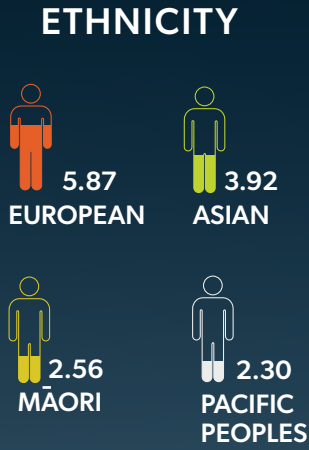
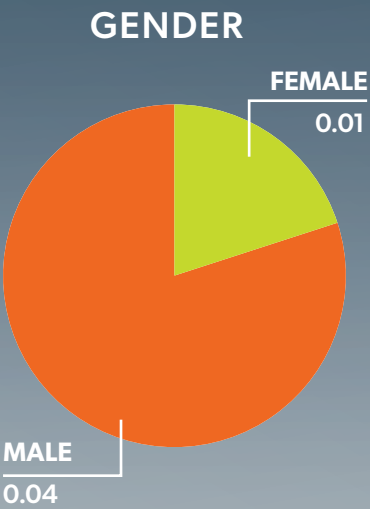
Tramping: Severe Injuries Per 10,000 Participants

MSC Advice

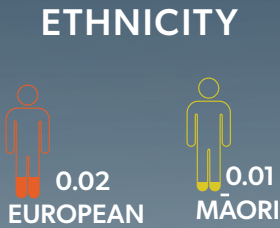
To reduce severe tramping injuries, as a priority target group, we should focus prevention efforts on females aged 50 and over, of European ethnicity, living in most urban areas of the country. Asian trampers have the second-highest rate of severe injuries per 10,000 participants, however the overall number of them involved is much lower.



AGE	PEOPLE
16-24	3.14
25-34	5.52
35-49	5.31
50-64	8.67
65+	9.95



AGE	PEOPLE
16-24	0.01
25-34	0.01
35-49	0.02
50-64	0.03
65+	0.07



Tramping: Fatalities Per 10,000 Participants

MSC Advice

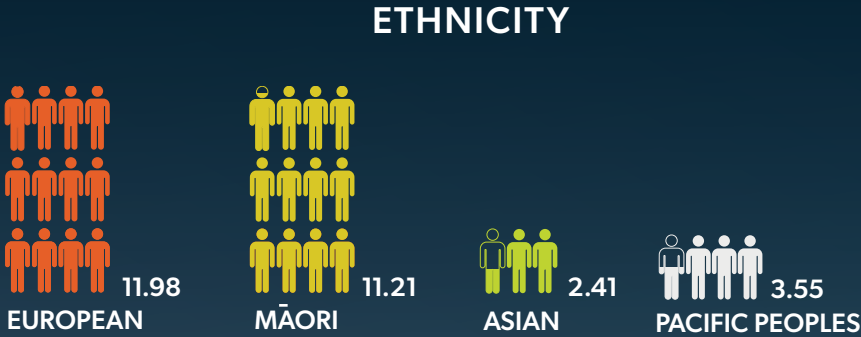
To reduce tramping fatalities involving New Zealanders, we should focus prevention efforts on males, aged over 35 years, of NZ European ethnicity, tramping in, Queenstown-Lakes, West Coast, Southland and Tasman areas.

Hunting: Severe Injuries Per 10,000 Participants

MSC Advice

To reduce severe hunting injuries, as a priority target group, we should focus prevention efforts on males aged 35-65 years, of European and Māori ethnicity. Those living, or hunting in, Southland, Central North Island, Canterbury, Tasman/Marlborough, Auckland, Gisborne, Dunedin, Rotorua and Waikato areas.

AGE	PEOPLE
16-24	11.21
25-34	12.15
35-49	13.03
50-64	15.83
65+	12.35



AGE	PEOPLE
16-24	0.04
25-34	0.04
35-49	0.06
50-64	0.07
65+	0.18



Hunting: Fatalities Per 10,000 Participants

MSC Advice

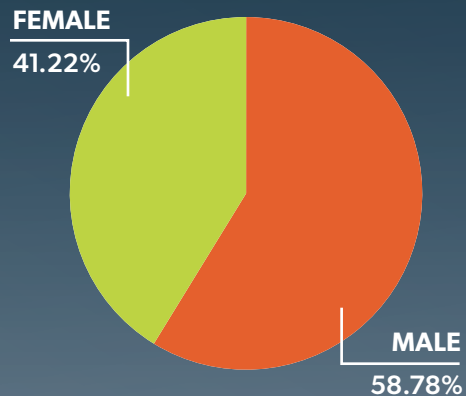
To reduce hunting fatalities involving New Zealanders, we should focus prevention efforts on males, aged over 35 years, of NZ European ethnicity, hunting in, Southland, West Coast, Queenstown-Lakes, Central North Island and Bay of Plenty.

Mountaineering: All Injuries

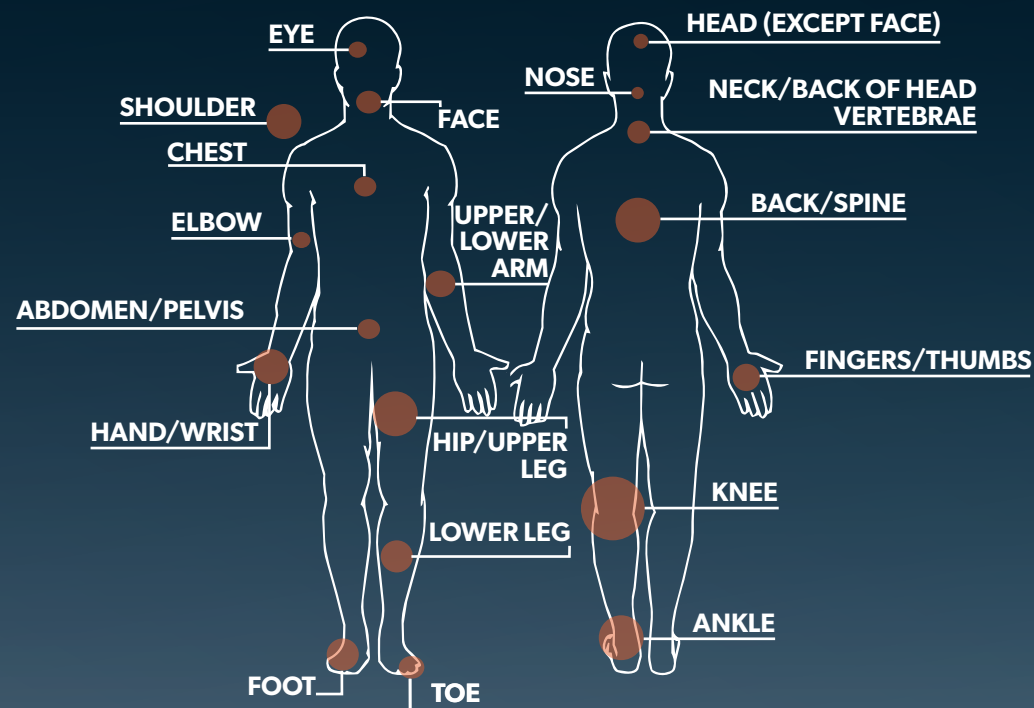
MSC Advice

To reduce mountaineering injuries, as a priority target group, we should focus prevention efforts on males aged 25-34 years, of European ethnicity. Those living, or climbing in, Central North Island, Taranaki, Canterbury, Queenstown-Lakes and West Coast areas.

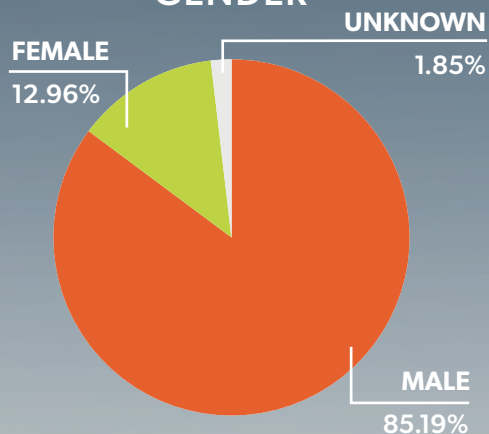
GENDER



AGE	% TOTAL
25-34	35.5%
35-49	23.7%
50-64	19.2%
16-24	17.1%
65+	3.7%
1-15	0.8%



GENDER



AGE	% TOTAL
25-34	32.5%
35-49	29.6%
50-64	18.5%
16-24	9.3%
65+	5.6%
UNKNOWN	1.9%

NATIONALITY	TOTAL
NEW ZEALAND	32
AUSTRALIA	11
GERMANY	3
UNKNOWN	2
ALL OTHER	6

Mountaineering: Fatalities

MSC Advice

To reduce mountaineering fatalities, we should focus prevention efforts on males, aged 25-49 years, of NZ European ethnicity, climbing in Aoraki/Mt Cook, Taranaki Maunga, Mt Aspiring and Ruapehu areas.

SECTION FIVE

Bespoke Data Requests

This section includes customised data or insights queries from Land Safety Forum members.

If you have a bespoke request, please ask MSC.



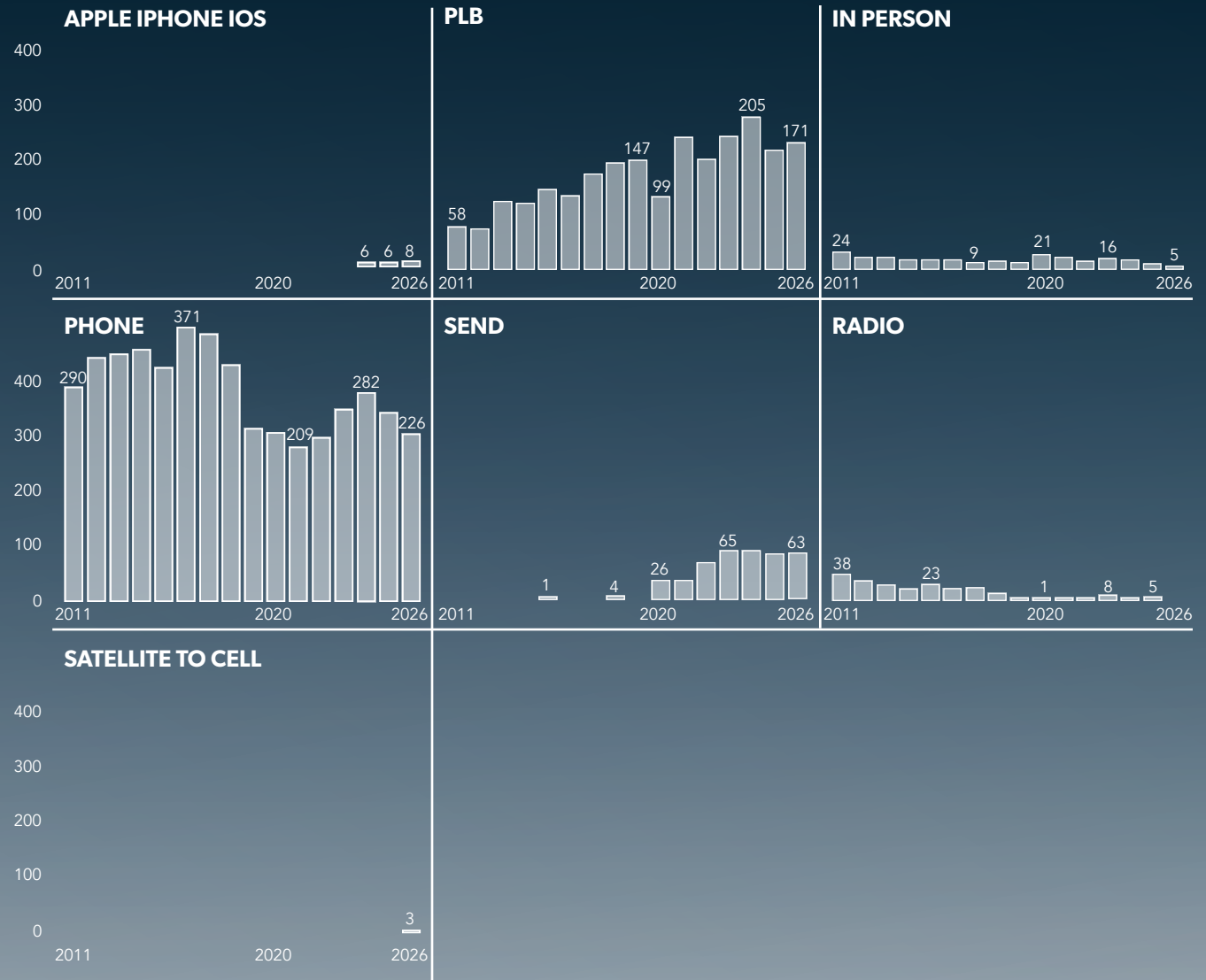
SAR Alert Method

There are many methods that a distressed person can use to call for help or raise the alarm. Over time, we can see a shift in the methods used, unsurprisingly, this reflects changes in technology and the everyday products and services that people use.

For example, portable mountain radios were once a common communication device, nowadays they're almost obsolete.

Around 2019-2020 there is a visible shift in alert methods. Through this period 'radio' based methods virtually ended, 'SEND' devices' (such as Garmin InReach) took off, and 'phone' decreased to around 50%, where it has roughly stayed since then.

The rise of PLBS's is evident over the last 15 years, and more recently the addition of Apple iPhone SOS and satellite direct to cell.



SECTION SIX

Cause

Available in future updates. The work required remains on-going.





OUTDOOR SAFETY
NZ MOUNTAIN SAFETY COUNCIL



NZ MOUNTAIN SAFETY COUNCIL

Thank you

For questions or feedback, please contact MSC at nathan.watson@mountainsafety.org.nz