



Understanding Potential Risks in the Region

The West Coast region stretches 600km from Karamea in the north down to Haast in the south. With a diverse geographical region we also have a range of risks that you may encounter on your journey:

Alpine environments

The weather can change quickly in these areas, always ensure that you carry appropriate warm clothing (even in summer) and check the local weather forecast before setting off on any adventures.

Sun protection

New Zealand has high UV levels which make it easy to get sunburnt. We recommend using sunscreen with a 50+ SPF rating.

Earthquakes

New Zealand is a geologically active country and earthquakes may occur from time to time. If you feel an earthquake follow the "Drop, Cover and Hold" action. We encourage you to familiarise yourself with official advice if you are unsure: [Civil Defence: What to do in an earthquake](#)

Hot Pools & Thermal Water Safety

Our natural hot pools are designed for relaxation but care is still required. Ensure you are limiting soak times to avoid overheating or dehydration, drink water regularly, take care when entering or exiting pools, as surfaces may be wet or slippery, and please never leave children unsupervised.

Driving

If you're self-driving, expect some roads to be narrow, winding or steep, with one-lane bridges in places. In winter, ice may be present on shaded or alpine sections. Take your time, drive to the conditions, and plan regular rest breaks on longer journeys.

Weather, Rain & Rapidly Changing Conditions

The West Coast is known for "four seasons in a day." Sunshine can quickly turn to rain, wind or cooler temperatures — especially in alpine areas or near glaciers. Heavy rainfall is common and part of what makes our rainforests so lush, but it can also create slippery tracks, surface flooding and reduced visibility on roads. Always carry warm, waterproof layers (even on short walks), check the forecast regularly, and be prepared to adjust your plans if conditions change.

Sandflies



Sandflies love the Coast as much as we do. Insect repellent and light-layered clothing help keep them at bay.

Accommodation & Transport Safety

Accommodation

Review the evacuation plan provided in your room and familiarise yourself with the nearest exits and the assembly point.

Transfer providers

Where seatbelts are fitted, they must be worn under New Zealand law. Follow driver instructions at all times, especially in narrow or winding sections of road.