



Lifeboats

WATER SAFETY KEY MESSAGES BOOKLET



Version 2

Scan for more water safety tips.



RNLI.org/Safety

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INFLUENCING TIPS

To give yourself the best chance of influencing people's behaviour:

- **Think about who you are speaking to.** Who are the members of the group and what influence do you have? Are you and/or the RNLI best placed to deliver the messages to the group? Would it be better to train a prominent member of the group to talk to the others?
- **Build partnerships within the group** to help influence change.
- **Avoid talking about just safety.** Use language they will relate to.
- **Relate your conversation to their motivations.** Tell them how the behaviour change will help them achieve their goals.
- **Consider their attitude to the activity and safety.** If they already feel safe, it is difficult to persuade them to be even safer.



INFLUENCING TIPS

AISDA model

This AISDA model is a great tool for helping you to have a well-structured conversation giving tailored advice:

ATTENTION

Engage with the public and start a conversation

Body language – look approachable and friendly

Timing – engage early, don't wait for them to walk past!

Your opening line – what are you going to say, and how?

INTEREST

Build rapport and get their interest

Ask questions – find out about them

Build rapport – be relatable and earn their trust

Find the link – how can you create buy in?

SAFETY

Give tailored safety messages

Use what you know about the person –

give information that is relevant

Be interactive – fun = memorable (particularly with children)

Don't blag it – work with your colleagues to find a solution

Tell them why you are there – people don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it. For us at the RNLI the why is very easy: to save more lives around the water. For the participant it is to get more out of their activity by avoiding the pitfalls and keeping themselves safe. Use personal or local stories to create desire to change their actions.

Just ask – get them to take some accountability
Keep it simple

Objections to the message

We all know life is not always plain sailing – people will challenge you. Objections might include:

- 'It's too expensive'
- 'It will never happen to me'
- 'I only go out in good weather'
- 'I've done this training before, years ago'

So remember:

- **Listen** – what is their objection?
- **Empathise** – show you understand
- **Respond** – address their concern.



What is cold water shock?

Cold water shock makes you gasp uncontrollably and inhale water, which can quickly lead to drowning. Triggered in water temperatures lower than 15°C (the average temperature of UK and Irish waters is 12°C), it can steal the air from your lungs and leave you helpless in seconds.

These symptoms can last around 90 seconds, during which even the fittest person is unable to swim or focus on breathing. Whatever your activity, wearing a well-fitted, well-maintained and suitable lifejacket or buoyancy aid could save your life, along with knowing how to float in an emergency.

Personal Flotation Devices

Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) is a term used for both buoyancy aids and lifejackets. The type of PFD you choose will depend on the activity you are planning to do. You should always choose a PFD that has been tested and approved to UK or Irish standards.

For a PFD to work, it is crucial that it fits properly. If the PFD has crotch straps, these should always be used. Doing so will stop the PFD from rising up and ensure that your airway is kept clear of the water.

It's also important to have your PFD regularly checked and serviced, as advised in the manufacturer's instructions. This will make sure that your PFD works as designed.

Types of PFD: Buoyancy aid – level 50

Level 50 buoyancy aids are recommended for use by swimmers in sheltered waters or for those taking part in watersports where help is close at hand. They are not able to protect a person who is unable to help themselves, as they are not designed to turn a person from a face-down position in the water.



Lifejacket – level 100

Level 100 lifejackets are recommended for use in sheltered or calm waters. They may not have enough buoyancy to protect a person who is unable to help themselves and may not roll an unconscious person on to their back.



Lifejacket – level 150

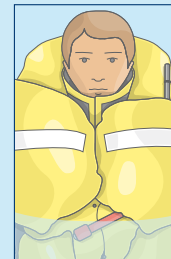
Level 150 lifejackets are designed for general use on coastal and offshore waters. They should turn an unconscious person on to their back and keep their face out of the water. Their performance may be affected if the user is wearing heavy and/or waterproof clothing.



Find out more: RNLI.org/lifejackets

Lifejacket – level 275

Level 275 lifejackets are designed for offshore use, primarily for extreme conditions and for those wearing heavy protective clothing that may affect the self-righting ability of lesser lifejackets. This lifejacket is designed to ensure that the wearer is floating in the correct position with their mouth and nose clear of the surface of the water.



FLOAT TO LIVE

When you fall into water below 15°C, you instinctively gasp for air, increasing your chance of inhaling water. Instead, relax and float for around 90 seconds to minimise this risk.

Follow these simple steps to float:

1. Relax and try to breathe normally.
2. Head back with ears submerged.
3. It's OK if your legs sink – we all float differently.
4. Move your hands to help you stay afloat.
5. Spread your arms and legs.
6. Once you've regained control, call for help or swim for safety.

To find our latest safety campaign:

RNLI.org/Float

WEATHER

We always recommend that people check the weather forecast before going in, on or around the water and be aware of the changing weather conditions as they may not follow the forecast. People should always be prepared to change their plans or cancel their trip.

Points to discuss when talking about checking the weather forecast:

- **Wind strength.** This can cause a rapid change in water conditions and can also affect people when they're around the coastline. Extra care should be taken when strong wind is forecasted. We always advise people to take extra care around the coast when a storm or strong wind warning is in place.
- **Wind direction.** Extra care should be taken when the wind is blowing offshore (wind coming off the land) as there is a higher risk of getting blown out to sea.
- **Wind direction and tidal flow.** When these are opposing each other (wind against tide) this can cause the water to change and can become very rough.

Air and water temperature

The average UK and Irish water temperature is 12°C which is classed as cold water even in the summer. People should wear suitable protection for the conditions (eg a wetsuit or suncream). Wind chill and exposure to the water can easily catch people out. There are lots of weather apps and websites available. For general weather forecasts and weather warnings we recommend using the Met Office. They also produce specific forecasts, like the inshore waters forecast and shipping forecasts. Other popular weather forecast sites and apps include Windfinder, Windguru, and Magicseaweed.

Swell forecast

In addition to checking the weather forecast, people should also check the swell forecast, especially those activities being undertaken along the coast such as rock angling and coastal walking. Popular swell forecast websites and apps include Windfinder, Windguru and Magicseaweed. Points to discuss when talking about checking the swell forecast:

- **Wave height.** Bigger swells could result in coastal locations which are not normally reached by waves being swamped.
- **Swell direction.** This also needs to be considered in relation to the tide and wind direction as it can increase the size of the swell.
- **Power of the waves.** These may take people by surprise and can knock them off their feet.

Stormy weather

Stormy weather can make our seas particularly dangerous and unpredictable. Large unexpected waves and swells are a major risk and can catch people out.

People need to be aware that the coastline will be exceptionally treacherous during storms. The large swell will mean that areas normally accessible at low tide may be cut off by storm surges. Sea walls and harbour areas may become inundated with surface flooding and large waves.



Photo: Steve Jones

Find out more: [RNLI.org/WeatherAndTides](https://www.rnli.org/WeatherAndTides)

TIDES

Tides are the rise and fall of sea levels caused by the combined gravitational forces exerted by the moon, the sun and the rotation of the earth. Different locations are affected by the tide in different ways and although there are tidal predictions, the tide still catches people out and can be affected by weather systems. Tidal forecasts often display the time and height of high water and low water as well as if it is a spring or neap tide. Points to discuss when talking about tides:

- **Tidal range.** The amount the water rises and falls often catches people out. Some areas have a very large tidal range and it is at its maximum at spring tides.
- **Spring tides.** Spring tides are the highest high tides and the lowest low tides. The dates of spring tides can be forecast. Spring tides can expose areas not normally uncovered by the tide and the water moves very quickly during a spring tide.
- **Tidal direction** (for on the water activity planning). This needs to be considered to make sure that you can return safely.
- **Variable factors.** Storm surges, wind direction and tidal, wind strength and atmospheric pressure can cause local variations.



High tide



Low tide

Photos: RNLI/Nigel Millard

Tidal cut off

This is a major cause of RNLI call outs. People are often unaware that they are in potential danger and, as such, are not prepared. There are a number of key areas that cause tidal cut off including:

- **Causeways.** Access to an island that covers and uncovers during a tidal cycle.
- **Sandbanks.** Flat sandy areas with raised banks that allow the tide to flow in all around, potentially leaving you stranded.
- **Headlands.** Headlands and rocky outcrops can create isolated bays. These bays can get cut off by an incoming tide. Cliffs are hazardous if there is not a safe exit.

Tidal cut off advice

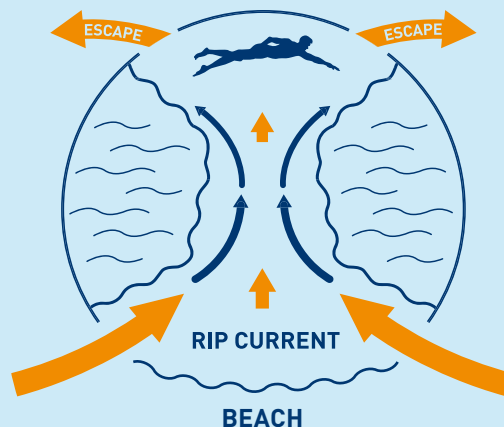
Our advice for tidal cut off:

- **Always check the tide times and heights and keep a look out for incoming tide. Use tide timetables or a tidal prediction app like AnyTide.** Make sure you have enough time to return safely. If in doubt, seek local advice.
- **Always carry a means of calling for help on your person.** Call 999 or 112 and ask for the coastguard if you are in danger or you see someone in danger of being cut off by the tide.
- **Tell someone else where you're going and when you'll be back.** They can raise the alarm with the coastguard by calling 999 or 112 if you are overdue.

Find out more: [RNLI.org/WeatherAndTides](https://www.rnli.org/WeatherAndTides)

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RIP CURRENTS



What to do if you're caught in a rip

- Stay calm – don't panic.
- If you can stand, wade. Don't try to swim.
- If you have an inflatable or board, keep hold of it to help you float.
- Raise your hand and shout for help loudly.
- Don't swim directly against the rip or you'll get exhausted.
- Swim parallel to the beach until free of the rip, then make for shore.
- If you can't swim, float. Lean back in the water and extend your arms and legs.

Find out more: [RNLI.org/BeachSafety](https://www.rnli.org/BeachSafety)

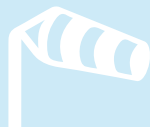


BEACH SAFETY



KEY MESSAGES

- **Always try to choose a lifeguarded beach and swim between the red and yellow flags.** If you can't make it to a lifeguarded beach, learn more about your chosen location before you go, and read local safety signs.
- **Check the weather forecast and tide times.** See Weather section on page 10.
- **Inflatables are not designed for use in the sea.** Inflatables are a major cause of summer incidents. If you are in trouble, stay with your inflatable and call and signal for help.
- **Be aware that even on hot days the sea temperature can be cold.** See Flotation section on page 7.
- **Avoid rip currents.** Rips are strong currents running out to sea. They can take you from the shallows very quickly and leave you out of your depth. They are especially powerful in larger surf, but they're also found around river mouths, estuaries and man-made structures like piers and groynes. Rips can catch even the most experienced beachgoers out, so ask lifeguards for advice on how you can avoid rips.



BEACH SAFETY

Know your flags



Red and yellow flags

Lifeguarded area. Safest area to swim, bodyboard and use inflatables.



Black and white chequered flags

For surfboards, stand up paddleboards, kayaks and other non-powered craft. Launch and recovery area for kitesurfers and windsurfers. Never swim or bodyboard here.



Red flag

Danger! Never go in the water under any circumstances when the red flag is flying.



Orange windsock

Indicates offshore or strong winds. Never use inflatables when the windsock is flying.

Inflatables



Blow-up toys and airbeds are designed for pools, not the sea where they can easily be blown offshore.

If you must use them at the beach, then:

- ensure children are closely supervised
- keep nearby
- only use between the red and yellow flags
- follow the lifeguards' advice
- do not take out in big waves
- do not use when the orange windsock is flying, as this indicates offshore winds.

Supervision of children

- Children should always be supervised.
- Agree a meeting point in case of separation. If the beach runs a children's safety scheme, using wristbands or tickets, take part.

What to do if a child goes missing

- Calmly check the surroundings first, ensuring other children remain supervised.
- Contact the lifeguards or police and keep them informed.
- Let all searchers know once the child is found.

Find out more: [RNLI.org/BeachSafety](https://www.rnli.org/BeachSafety)



INLAND WATER SAFETY

The RNLI saves lives on coastal waters, but we also operate on inland waterways. These include the River Thames, Loch Ness in Scotland, Lough Erne in Northern Ireland, and Loughs Derg and Ree in Ireland.

KEY MESSAGES

- **The water is cold, so if someone enters the water, there is a risk of cold water shock.** They should float until they feel calm and then swim to safety if they can.
- **Beware hidden dangers.** There can be objects below the water that cannot be seen, which may cause entrapment and injury.
- **Take care and be wary of all edges around the waterside.** Slips and falls happen in all locations. If you can, stick to designated paths.
- **Look out for safety and warning signs.**
- **Make sure you always carry a means of calling for help on your person.** Call 999 or 112 if you or someone else is in trouble in the water. The operator will be able to direct you to the appropriate emergency service.



CALLING FOR HELP

If you see someone in trouble in the water, call for help and tell the call handler someone is in trouble in the water.

If you are at the coast using a mobile phone, call 999 or 112 and ask for the coastguard. Once you have called for help:

- **stay at a safe distance and do not enter the water**
- **encourage them to float on their back**
- **look for anything you can throw to help them float, eg public rescue equipment (such as a lifering)**
- **keep watch until help arrives.**

Devices

There are a number of different devices that can be used as a means for calling for help. With all activities we strongly encourage people to take a means of calling for help that is most suitable to their activity. We advise that they know how to use it and where it is a personal device to keep it on their person.

KEY

PERSONAL OR VESSEL	The intended location for the storage of the device.
GMDSS	It is recommended that you choose a Global Maritime Distress Safety System approved by the International Maritime Organisation. These are mandatory for certain vessels.
ONE-TO-ONE	The alert will be received by one person.
ONE-TO-MANY	The alert will be received by multiple recipients.
SafeTrx	This free app monitors your journeys and alerts emergency contacts if you fail to return home on time. Download and use the RYA or ISA SafeTrx app to log, track and send alerts about your trip.

Mobile phone (in a waterproof pouch)

Personal or vessel	PERSONAL
GMDSS approved	NO
One-to-one or one-to-many	ONE-TO-ONE Call 999 or 112 and ask for the coastguard, who will launch the correct search and rescue services.
Range	UP TO 18 NMILES Network dependent, mobile coverage is generally poor around the coast, although coverage for voice calls is usually better than data.



Things to consider

- Keep your mobile in a waterproof pouch. You should wear this on your person so it's within easy reach - it's no use if you can't reach it.
- Smart phones can provide a location, but emergency calls should be made by voice (call 999 or 112 and ask for the coastguard).
- Download and use the RYA/Irish Sailing SafeTrx app that can be used to log, track and send alerts about your trip.

You should still call 999 or 112 even if your own mobile phone network has no coverage, as your phone will try to connect to any other available network.

FIXED VHF/DSC - Very High Frequency/Digital Selective Calling



Personal or vessel	VESSEL
GMDSS approved	YES
One-to-one or one-to-many	ONE-TO-MANY Communicates distress messages to all shore stations and vessels in range.
Range	MAXIMUM 30 NMILES (depending on height of antenna)

Things to consider

- A DSC distress alert is a recognised emergency signal and it also transmits your location.
- Requires an operator's licence, a ship's portable radio or ship's radio licence (free in the UK if requested online) and a Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI) number, which comes with the radio licence.
- Send a DSC alert followed by a mayday voice call on Channel 16. This communicates the distress message to all vessels and shore stations in range.

HANDHELD VHF/DSC - Very High Frequency/Digital Selective Calling

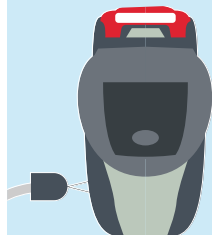


Personal or vessel	PERSONAL
GMDSS approved	YES
One-to-one or one-to-many	ONE-TO-MANY Communicates distress message to all shore stations and vessels in range.
Range	UP TO 5 NMILES FROM 2.75 NMILES (handheld to handheld) VHF range is limited by antenna height.

Things to consider

- If possible, buy a DSC-equipped radio (some are not). A DSC distress alert is a recognised emergency signal, and it also transmits your location.
- Send a DSC alert followed by a mayday voice call on Channel 16. This communicates the distress message to all vessels and shore stations in range.
- Requires an operator's licence, a ship's portable radio or ship's radio licence (free in the UK if requested online) and a Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI) number, which comes with the radio licence.

PLB - Personal Locator Beacon



Personal or vessel **PERSONAL**

GMDSS approved **YES**

One-to-one or
one-to-many

ONE-TO-ONE

The distress signals are passed to the relevant maritime rescue coordination centre, which will launch the search and rescue services.

Range

WORLDWIDE COVERAGE

(frequency 406 MHz and 121.5 MHz)

Things to consider

- Recognised emergency signal.
- Manually activated only.
- Must be registered with the coastguard to aid in rescue coordination.
- Always choose a GPS-enabled PLB.
- Should always be on your person.
- Not all PLBs inherently float.
- Can also be used on land in areas where no phone signal is available.
- Unit needs to be held out of water for it to transmit.
- Transmits for 24 hours plus.
- Divers will need to carry the PLB in a dive canister.

AIS MOB DEVICE - Automatic Identification System Man Overboard Device

Personal or vessel **PERSONAL**

GMDSS approved **NO**

One-to-one or
one-to-many

ONE-TO-MANY

Communicates by electronically exchanging data with AIS receivers on ships and inland base stations' as per the fold out 1991752.

Range

LESS THAN 5 NMILES IN OPEN WATER

Could be as little as 2.5 nmiles - dependent on receiving antenna height.



Things to consider

- Can be automatically activated - will work if casualty is unconscious.
- In a man overboard situation, this device automatically alerts all AIS receivers within range.
- Poor range if affected by obstacles.
- Should always be on your person.

SIGNALLING FOR HELP

EPIRB - Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon



Personal or vessel	VESSEL
GMDSS approved	YES
One-to-one or one-to-many	ONE-TO-ONE The distress signals are passed to the relevant maritime rescue coordination centre, which will launch the correct search and rescue services.
Range	WORLDWIDE COVERAGE (frequency 406 MHz and 121.5 MHz)

Things to consider

- Recognised emergency signal.
- Can be float-free, automatic or manual.
- Must be registered with the coastguard to aid in rescue coordination.
- Always choose a GPS-enabled EPIRB.
- Can be dropped next to a man overboard to mark their position.
- Fitted with a flashing light.
- Some SAR resources have radio direction finding that equipment can be fitted and used to home in on the beacon.
- Transmits for 48 hours plus.

Flares

Personal or vessel	PERSONAL AND VESSEL
GMDSS approved	NO
One-to-one or one-to-many	ONE-TO-MANY
Range	PARACHUTE ROCKET - UP TO 28 NMILES RED PIN POINT - UP TO 5 NMILES ORANGE SMOKE - UP TO 3 NMILES



Things to consider

- Not advised as a primary means of calling for help.
- Learn how to use them before you need them.
- Can be used to help search and rescue services pin point your position.

EVDS - Electronic Visual Distress Signals



Personal or vessel	PERSONAL AND VESSEL
GMDSS approved	NO
One-to-one or one-to-many	ONE-TO-MANY
Range	UP TO 7 NMILES (depending upon the height above the sea of the observer and signaller, as well as the manufacturer)

Things to consider

- Could be confused with background lights.
- Can be turned on and off.
- Can be thrown to a person in the water to aid their recovery.
- Use replaceable batteries.
- Some double as a torch.

There are other methods to signal for help such as whistles and signalling mirrors.



If you are at a lifeguarded beach and get into difficulty, raise your arm and shout for help as this will alert the lifeguards.

Find out more: [RNLI.org/CallingForHelp](https://www.rnli.org/CallingForHelp)

MOTORBOATING



Target audience

Men aged 45–59 who are experienced boaters, particularly those accessing the shore with dinghies or tenders.

Motivations

Motorboating covers a wide range of craft, from small RIBs to powerboats and motor cruisers. For many it's about getting out on the water and relaxing. For others it's about the lifestyle and social aspects.

Attitudes to safety

- Motorboaters are likely to check the weather forecast before setting off.
- The level of safety equipment may vary depending on the type of boating.
- More than half of casualties in the water were not wearing a PFD.
- Most incidents occur between April and June – with a further peak in August – in mostly calm conditions when boaters may be complacent about safety.
- Some motorboaters undertake risky behaviour and may not recognise all the risks. Alcohol is a factor in 1 in 4 incidents.
- Many boaters fail to carry out basic maintenance, which causes machinery failure. This is the largest single cause of RNLI callouts.

How to reach motorboaters

- Speak face-to-face. Key places to engage people include marinas, clubs, chandleries, powerboating hotspots and events.
- Practical demonstrations of safety equipment and procedures can be useful.
- Work with key stakeholders in organisations such as the Royal Yachting Association (RYA), Irish Sailing, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), and the Irish Coast Guard.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Be prepared to fall overboard.** Wear a PFD at all times, including when using a dinghy or tender to access your boat.
- **Have a safety plan and always carry a means of calling for help** – ensure everyone onboard knows how to use it. Consider having an additional method like the SafeTrx app. You can also use this app to plan your voyage, and it can alert the coastguard if you are overdue. You should also register your vessel with the coastguard through this app.
- **If you're powerboating, always wear a kill cord and carry a spare.**
- **Get relevant training.** In particular, develop and practise man overboard procedures with everyone onboard and conduct a safety briefing. Contact your national governing body, club or watersports activity centre to find out which training is best for you.
- **Always check the forecast and tide times.** Make sure you drive your boat at a speed that is appropriate to the conditions and environment you are operating within.
- **Tell someone else where you're going and when you'll be back.** They can raise the alarm with the coastguard by calling 999 or 112 if you are overdue.
- **Ensure your engine is well maintained.** And always carry adequate tools and spares to fix any problems you encounter – and ensure you have enough fuel for your journey.

Find out more: [RNLI.org/boating](https://www.rnli.org/boating)

Target audience

Sailing is done by people of all genders but men over 35 are most at risk, particularly those aged 60–74 who are experienced sailors and those accessing the shore with dinghies or tenders.

Motivations

Yacht sailing encompasses a variety of craft in a range of sizes, used for both cruising and racing. Many sailors love the sense of freedom and self-reliance, plus the simple pleasure of being by or on the water.

Attitudes to safety

- Alcohol is a factor in 1 in 4 incidents.
- Over half of the people who go overboard are not wearing a PFD.

How to reach sailors

- Speak face-to-face. Key places to engage people include marinas, clubs, chandleries, sailing hotspots and events.
- Practical demonstrations of safety equipment and procedures can be useful.
- Work with key stakeholders in organisations such as the Royal Yachting Association (RYA), Irish Sailing, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), and the Irish Coast Guard.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Be prepared to fall overboard.** Wear a PFD at all times, including when using a dinghy or tender to access your boat.
- **Have a safety plan and always carry a means of calling for help— ensure everyone onboard knows how to use it.** Consider having an additional method like the SafeTrx app. You can also use this app to plan your voyage, and it can alert the coastguard if you are overdue. You should also register your vessel with the coastguard through this app.
- **Develop your skills.** Practise man overboard procedures with everyone onboard and conduct a safety briefing.
- **Get the right training.** Contact your national governing body, club or watersports activity centre to get the best training for your needs.
- **Always check the weather forecast and tide times.**
- **Tell someone else where you're going and when you'll be back.** They can raise the alarm with the coastguard by calling 999 or 112 if you are overdue. Consider using a SafeTrx app to plan your voyage as it can alert the coastguard if you are overdue.
- **Ensure your engine is well maintained.** Plus always carry enough fuel for your journey, and adequate tools and spares.

Find out more: RNLI.org/boating



WALKING AND RUNNING



Target audience

People of all ages, particularly men aged 15–29, 34–49 and over 60. People who are unfamiliar with local tides or have consumed alcohol and are walking home in the dark.

Motivations

Many people walk or run for pleasure, to relax and get outside. Some walk dogs, run or hike for exercise. And some walking is functional, such as commuting to work or getting home after an evening out.

Attitudes to safety

- Walkers feel they are not in danger of going in the water.
- Many underestimate the risks involved such as slips, trips, falls and being cut off by the tide.
- If a dog or animal gets into trouble at the coast, many walkers don't prioritise their own safety and will go in after them. This puts them at risk and is a cause of many RNLI call outs.

How to reach walkers and runners

- Some walkers meet at pubs or restaurants to plan or set off for their walk. Face-to-face interventions at key local sites are an effective way to communicate key safety messages.
- Consider trialling face-to-face interventions at incident hotspots.
- Collaborating with organisations involved in the activity such as rambling and running clubs can be a good way to share safety messages with a larger number of the target population. You can also work with town councils, large employers, public services, pubs, shops, equipment manufacturers and land owners.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Float to live.** If you find yourself unexpectedly in the water, fight your instinct to swim. Instead float until the effects of cold water shock pass and you can breathe comfortably.
- **Take care and be wary of all edges around the sea and waterside.** Slips and falls happen in all locations, not just high cliff edges. Try to stick to marked pathways.
- **Always take a means of calling for help.**
- **If you or someone else is in trouble call 999 or 112 and ask for the coastguard. Consider taking a mobile phone with the SafeTrx app.**
- **Always check the weather forecast and tide times.** Make sure you don't get caught out by the conditions.
- **Tell someone else where you're going and when you'll be back.** They can raise the alarm with the coastguard by calling 999 or 112 if you are overdue.

DOG WALKING KEY MESSAGES

- **Keep your dog on a lead if you're close to cliff edges or the water's edge.**
- **If your dog goes into the water or gets stuck in mud, don't go in after them.** Move to a place where the dog could get out easily and call them – they will probably get out by themselves. If you're worried your dog can't get out, call 999 or 112 and ask for the coastguard.

Find out more: [RNLI.org/walking](https://www.rnli.org/walking)

Find out more: [RNLI.org/TopDog](https://www.rnli.org/TopDog)



STAND-UP PADDLEBOARDING (SUP)



Target audience

Adventure stand-up paddleboarders.

Motivations

SUP is easily accessible for people who want to explore the coastline and waterways on flat water, and for those who like to use their boards in the surf. For some, it's the chance to relax and get away. For others it's the social aspect, for exercise and fitness, adventure and exploration or the adrenaline.

Attitudes to safety

People feel safe when stand-up paddleboarding.

How to speak to stand-up paddlers

- Concentrate on how the behaviour change will enhance their motivations. For instance, carrying a means of calling for help will allow them to get away for longer, get more exercise, explore more, and push their boundaries – knowing they can easily contact their mates or call for assistance.
- Make the message relevant to your area, so talk about stand-up paddleboarding locally and how the behaviour change will benefit them.
- Use watersports shops and activity providers to speak to stand-up paddleboarders to reinforce your message.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Always wear your leash and hold onto your board if you get into trouble.** It will help you float.
- **Always carry a means of calling for help on your person.** You must be able to reach it easily in an emergency. If it can't be reached, it's no help. Consider taking a mobile phone with the SafeTrx app.
- **Always try to choose a lifeguarded beach and make sure you launch and recover between the black and white chequered flags.**
- **Tell someone else where you're going and when you'll be back.** They can raise the alarm with the coastguard by calling 999 or 112 if you are overdue.
- **Always check the weather forecast and tide times.** Don't get caught out by the conditions. Avoid offshore winds because they will tire you quickly when trying to return to shore
- **Always wear a personal flotation device.** Make sure you are also wearing suitable clothing for the forecasted conditions.
- **Always try to paddle with someone else.** They can raise the alarm in an emergency by calling 999 or 112 and asking for the coastguard.

Find out more: RNLI.org/SUP

OPEN-WATER SWIMMING



Target audience

'Males over the age of 16, and people of all ages during the summer. Anyone can tire quickly in the sea; 1 in 4 fatalities are experienced swimmers. Very few outdoor swimmers are members of clubs. 15–29-year-olds are at higher risk of an alcohol-related incident.

Motivations

People swim to relax or do it for fun and fitness.

Attitudes to safety

- Swimmers may overestimate their ability and underestimate the unseen currents, cold water and waves that make open-water swimming more challenging.
- They may not always recognise all the risks.
- They don't always think it's necessary to swim between the flags.

How to reach open-water swimmers

- Clear and consistent messages are key to helping swimmers understand safety advice.
- Practical demonstrations of safety equipment, procedures and practices are useful.
- Meeting people at their swimming location is an effective way to communicate key safety messages. These meetings help swimmers to identify local risks, and make plans around local conditions such as the weather and tides.
- Consider trialling face-to-face meetings at incident hotspots.
- Collaborate with local stakeholders such as town councils, large employers, public services, pubs, shops, swimming clubs,

equipment manufacturers and land owners to share and strengthen key safety messages as well as reaching a large number of the target population.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Never swim alone.** Open water swimming is much more fun with someone else, and you can look out for each other.
- **Always try to choose a lifeguarded beach and swim between the red and yellow flags.** If you can't make it to a lifeguarded beach, learn more about your chosen location before you go, and read local hazard signs.
- **Check weather forecast and tide times.**
- **Always carry a means of calling for help.** You must be able to reach it in an emergency. Consider taking a mobile phone with the SafeTrx app.
- **Acclimatise to cold water slowly and enter gradually to reduce the risk of cold water shock.** Always swim parallel to the shore and not straight out. Cold water and currents can tire you quickly and make it harder to return to shore.
- **Always consider using a tow float, and wear a brightly coloured swim hat.** This will increase your visibility in the water.
- **Tell someone else where you're going and when you'll be back.** They can raise the alarm with the coastguard by calling 999 or 112 if you are overdue.
- **Never swim alone or under the influence of alcohol, medication or drugs.**
- **If you see someone in trouble, call 999 or 112 and ask for the coastguard.**

Find out more: [RNLI.org/swimming](https://www.rnli.org/swimming)

KAYAKING AND CANOEING



Target audience

Men aged 35–54, particularly those aged 50–54. Ambitious, untrained learners who paddle infrequently but enjoy a challenge and may be unaware of the risks. Also, thrillseekers who are highly skilled and paddle frequently. The frequency of their paddling, often in challenging conditions, puts them at a higher risk.

Motivations

For some it's a chance to relax and get away. Others enjoy the social side or the adventure, exploration and adrenaline. Some do it for exercise and fitness, others for fishing. Kayaking and canoeing covers a broad range of activities and craft, from sit-on-top and inflatable kayaks to sea and surf kayaks, outriggers and canoes.

Attitudes to safety

- Experienced paddlers are generally aware of the risks. Novices, less so.
- Many feel they could survive an incident.
- Some consider themselves experienced paddlers and wear a PFD and follow safety procedures. Most fatalities had a PFD but they were rarely leashed to the craft and many were ill-fitted.
- They usually carry a means of calling for help, but not always on their person. This leads to their not being able to raise the alarm if they get into difficulty, especially if they capsize.

How to reach paddlers

- This group are increasingly being referred to as 'paddlers'.

- Retailers and hire shops can play an important role in distributing safety messages and materials to beginners.
- Clubs are a key location for distributing materials and information to more experienced paddlers, as well as a venue for targeted talks and training seminars.
- Specialist websites and forums can be a good way to reach experienced paddlers interested in improving their knowledge and gaining new skills.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Always carry a means of calling for help and keep it on your person.** You must be able to reach it easily in an emergency. Consider taking a mobile phone with the SafeTrx app.
- **Always check and wear your PFD.** Make sure you are also wearing suitable clothing for the forecasted weather.
- **Always check the weather forecast and tide times.** Don't get caught out by the conditions.
- **Consider labelling your equipment with contact details** so, if it's lost, the coastguard can check you are safe.
- **Tell someone else where you're going and when you'll be back.** They can raise the alarm with the coastguard by calling 999 or 112 if you are overdue.
- **Hone your skills.** Contact your national governing body, club or watersports activity centre to find out what training is best for your needs.
- **Always paddle with a friend or in a group.** This makes it more fun and they can help if needed.

Find out more: [RNLI.org/kayaking](https://www.rnli.org/kayaking)



COMMERCIAL FISHING



Target audience

Commercial fishing is done almost exclusively by men. Those aged 35–49 are most at risk, with those over 60 at an increased risk.

Motivations

Making a living is the main driver but, for some, it's also about family traditions, the lifestyle, or being outdoors and on the sea.

Attitudes to safety

- Many acknowledge that fishing is dangerous but believe 'it will not happen to me'.
- Uptake in wearing of personal flotation devices (PFDs) is increasing voluntarily, but many casualties are not wearing a lifejacket.
- Fish equals income, so fishermen are more likely to accept high levels of risk in order to get their next catch.

How to reach commercial fishermen

- The main method of communication used by fishermen is word of mouth, so adapting our approach to the local community through port visits is very effective.
- The local fishing community is highly important to fishermen. Fishing leaders and head fishermen are highly influential sources of knowledge. They're often involved in local fishermen's groups and able to disseminate information to other fishermen.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Always wear a personal flotation device (PFD).** Make sure it is fit for purpose and correctly maintained. A 2019 UK law states that it is mandatory for fishermen to wear a PFD on any open deck, unless they have a risk assessment that shows they cannot fall overboard.
- **Have a means of calling for help.** Consider attaching a personal locator beacon (PLB) to your PFD, so it's in reach at all times – particularly in a man overboard situation. Make sure you know how to activate your PLB in an emergency.
- **Have recovery ladders and a man overboard recovery plan.** Choose a recovery device suitable for your vessel and make sure everyone onboard knows the plan and has practised it.
- **Check vessel stability and don't overload your vessel.** By keeping your vessel's stability in mind throughout a trip, you can significantly reduce the risk of capsize, leaking or swamping.
- **Check your equipment.** Update any deck machinery identified as potentially dangerous. All crew should be fully trained on the equipment they are using, and regular risk assessments should be carried out to spot hazards and dangers on deck.

Find out more: [RNLI.org/Commercial-Fishing](https://www.rnli.org/Commercial-Fishing)





Target audience

Men aged 40–49, and those over 60, fishing from rocky shorelines and boats.

Motivations

For many, angling is an opportunity to relax and get away, to be outdoors, or to catch a specific size or species of fish.

Attitudes to safety

- They feel safe angling.
- Most anglers don't wear lifejackets.
- They will check the weather forecast and tide times.
- Sometimes they fish alone.
- Those who fish from a boat see themselves as anglers first before thinking of the boating risks.

How to reach anglers

- Interventions should be voluntary and not enforced. Anglers would not respond well to safety advice and programmes that may restrict or add barriers to participation.
- Use an advisory tone and focus on how the behaviour change will help them enjoy their sport more safely.
- Work with other respected stakeholders such as well-regarded local anglers and angling influencers, as well as organisations such as the Angling Trust or Scottish Sea Anglers Conservation Network.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Always wear a lifejacket when fishing from rocks or a boat*.** Modern automatic lifejackets are lightweight and comfortable. Those who wear them often forget they're wearing them. Remember to regularly check and service your lifejacket in line with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- **Always carry a means of calling for help on your person.** Whichever device you choose to call for help, you must be able to reach it easily in an emergency. Consider taking a mobile phone with the SafeTrx app.
- **Always check the weather forecast and tide times.** Anglers should check the tide times and predicted swell forecast. This is particularly important for shore anglers to reduce the risk of being swept away or cut off by the tide.
- **Tell someone else where you're going and when you'll be back.** They can raise the alarm with the coastguard by calling 999 or 112 if you are overdue.
- **When fishing from a boat, check your boat and equipment before every trip.**

*See motorboating on page 20 for specific key messages.

Find out more: [RNLI.org/angling](https://www.rnli.org/angling)



BODYBOARDING



Target audience

Those boarding outside of the red and yellow flagged lifeguarded area and those participating outside of lifeguard hours.

Motivations

Many enjoy the thrill and adventure, being part of the natural environment and its unpredictability, and the lifestyle and culture.

Attitudes to safety

- The thrill of the risk is part of the appeal.
- Experienced bodyboarders enjoy pushing the boundaries and may get into difficult situations in more extreme conditions.
- Casual beginners lack understanding of the danger associated with the environment.

How to speak to bodyboarders

- Concentrate on how the behaviour change will enhance their motivations. For instance, bodyboarding between the red and yellow flags with a mate – and checking the forecast – will enable them to get the best waves and have the most fun.
- Use surf shops, schools, youth groups, beaches and surf clubs to speak to bodyboarders.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Always try to choose a lifeguarded beach and bodyboard between the red and yellow flags.** If you can't make it to a lifeguarded beach, learn more about your chosen location before you go, and read local safety signs.
- **Always wear your leash and hold onto your board if you get into trouble – it will help you float.**
- **Always try to bodyboard with a mate, especially in big swell.** They can raise the alarm in an emergency by calling 999 or 112 and asking for the coastguard.
- **Tell someone else where you're going and when you'll be back.** They can raise the alarm with the coastguard by calling 999 or 112 if you are overdue.
- **Check the weather and swell forecast, and the tide times.** It's easy to be caught out. Don't challenge yourself too early, and know your limits.
- **If you get into difficulty, raise your arm and shout for help.** Even experienced bodyboarders can get into trouble. Consider staying within your depth or wearing fins in case you get caught out by a rip current.

Find out more: [RNLI.org/bodyboarding](https://www.rnli.org/bodyboarding)



COASTEERING



Target audience

Anyone coasteering without the supervision and guidance of a recognised provider.

Motivations

Those who coasteer enjoy exploring the coast by rock-hopping, shore-scrambling, swell-riding, cave-exploring and cliff-jumping. For some, it's about being in nature and discovering areas of the coast that are normally inaccessible. For others, it's the adventure, exploration or adrenaline.

Attitudes to safety

- Providers that are National Coasteering Charter (NCC) members have to meet safety standards.
- People often do not recognise the risks as they feel the instructor is in control.
- Those who coasteer independently may take some safety precautions (like wearing safety equipment) but their lack of local knowledge, planning and experience can cause them to get in trouble.

How to speak to the audience

- Concentrate on how the behaviour change will enhance their motivations. For example, a recognised NCC provider will still take them to great locations and will also help to ensure their safety.
- Use schools, youth clubs and NCC providers to speak to people about coasteering.

KEY MESSAGES

- Always use a recognised National Coasteering Charter (NCC) provider.
- Check that your provider has staff professionally trained in both technical and water safety disciplines.



Find out more: RNLI.org/safety

DINGHY SAILING

Target audience

Dinghy sailors of all ages, particularly those who sail alone or in adverse conditions.

Motivations

People enjoy dinghy sailing in a vast range of boats, from single-handed dinghies to high-performance foiling boats. For many it's about the enjoyment, thrill and competition. For some it's the social aspect, exercise and fitness, adventure and exploration, or just being on the water.

Attitudes to safety

- There's a high perception of the risks involved.
- Some feel that race procedures mitigate any risks.
- Many wear PFDs and follow safety procedures, like checking the weather and tides.

How to speak to the audience

- Concentrate on how the behaviour change will enhance their motivations. For example, checking and updating equipment will allow them to sail faster while remaining safe. Carrying a means of calling for help will allow them to adventure and explore further, and also survive if they get into trouble.
- Make the message relevant to your area. So talk about small boat sailing in the area and how the behaviour change will benefit them.
- Use sailing clubs to reinforce your messages.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Always wear a PFD.** Make sure you are also wearing clothing suitable for the forecasted weather.
- **Always carry a means of calling for help on your person.** You must be able to reach your means of calling for help easily in an emergency. If it can't be reached, it's no help. Consider taking a mobile phone with the SafeTrx app.
- **Always check the weather forecast and tide times.** Don't get caught out by the conditions.
- **Tell someone else where you're going and when you'll be back.** They can raise the alarm with the coastguard by calling 999 or 112 if you are overdue.
- **Hone your skills.** Contact your national governing body, club or watersports activity centre to find out what training is best for your needs.

Find out more: [RNLI.org/boating](https://www.rnli.org/boating)



KITESURFING

Target audience

Kitesurfers of all skill levels, particularly those who kite alone or in adverse conditions.

Motivations

For many it's about the adrenaline buzz and forgetting their cares.

Attitudes to safety

- Kitesurfers want the rush, not the risk, but the risk can provide the rush.
- Self-rescue is a key skill for kitesurfers, right from the outset.

How to speak to kitesurfers

- Concentrate on how the behaviour change will enhance their motivations. For instance, carrying a means of calling for help will allow them to get away for longer, push their limits and get more of a buzz – safe in the knowledge they can get help if they get into trouble.
- Use kitesurfing shops, launch sites, beaches, and kitesurfing clubs and schools to speak to kitesurfers.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Kite within your limitations.** Never ride out further than you can swim back. Consider labelling your gear with contact details so, if it's lost, the coastguard can check you are safe. Learn and practise how to complete a self-rescue and a deep-water pack down.
- **Check the forecast, current weather conditions and tide times.** Don't go out in offshore winds and conditions you can't handle. Check you're using the correct kite for the conditions. If you do not have the correct size, do not go out.
- **Always try to kite with another person.** They can help launch and land your kite, and can also raise the alarm in an emergency by calling 999 or 112 and asking for the coastguard.
- **Always carry a means for calling for help.** Consider a personal locator beacon (PLB) - especially if kitesurfing alone. It could be a lifesaver.
- **Always wear a personal flotation device.** Make sure you are also wearing suitable clothing for the forecasted weather conditions.
- **Tell someone else where you're going and when you'll be back.** They can raise the alarm with the coastguard by calling 999 or 112 if you are overdue.

Find out more: RNLI.org/kitesurfing



PERSONAL WATERCRAFT



Target audience

Anyone going afloat alone, in adverse conditions, with poorly maintained kit or without a kill cord.

Motivations

People enjoy the freedom, thrill and adventure, pushing their limits and being part of an unpredictable environment.

Attitudes to safety

- Users often wear safety equipment – including wetsuit, PFD and kill cord.
- Some may get too close to others, create waves and turn sharply – all of which increase risk.
- Some may not adhere to speed limits.
- Many fail to carry out basic maintenance or carry enough fuel. This can leave them vulnerable in busy waterways or hazardous areas.

How to speak to the audience

- Concentrate on how the behaviour change will enhance their motivations. For example, sticking to speed limits in restricted areas will keep the harbour master off their back and give them more freedom.
- Use launch sites to speak to personal watercraft riders.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Always wear a personal flotation device.** Stay with your craft in an emergency, it will keep you afloat and easy to locate. Make sure you are also wearing suitable clothing for the forecasted conditions.
- **Always carry a means of calling for help on your person.** You must be able to reach it easily in an emergency. If it can't be reached, it's no help. Consider taking a mobile phone with the SafeTrx app.
- **Develop your skills.** Contact your national governing body, club or watersports activity centre to find out which training is best for your needs.
- **Tell someone else where you're going and when you'll be back.** They can raise the alarm with the coastguard by calling 999 or 112 if you are overdue.
- **Always check the forecast and tide times.** Don't get caught out by the conditions.
- **Ensure your engine is well maintained.** Always carry adequate tools and spares to fix any problems you encounter, and ensure you have enough fuel for your journey.
- **Always check your equipment.** In particular, make sure the drainage plug is in place.
- **Always wear a kill cord if fitted and carry a spare.**

Find out more: [RNLI.org/safety](https://www.rnli.org/safety)



ROWING

Incorporating all forms of rowing



Target audience

Mostly men aged 16–54 years old, taking part in all kinds of rowing or sculling (including fine boats, stable boats, coastal, surf, gigs and ocean). Many of whom are rowing outside the influence of their governing bodies.

Motivations

Some rowers enjoy being on the water as part of a crew. Some do it for the competition, for health and fitness, or the physical challenge.

Attitudes to safety

- Rowers don't consider their sport risky.
- The majority don't wear a personal flotation device due to the perceived bulkiness and restricted movement.
- Some underestimate the impact of cold water shock.

How to speak to rowers

- Concentrate on how the behaviour change will enhance their motivations. For instance: wearing a suitable flotation device and carrying a means of calling for help will allow them and their crew to compete hard and row for longer while staying safe.
- Use launch sites and clubs to speak to rowers and scullers.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Always carry a means of calling for help on your person.** You must be able to reach it easily in an emergency. If it can't be reached, it's no help. Consider taking a mobile phone with the SafeTrx app when rowing in open water.
- **Always wear a personal flotation device.** Make sure you are also wearing suitable clothing for the forecasted weather conditions.
- **Always keep a good look out.** Collisions can cause serious injuries.
- **Always check the forecast and tide times.** Don't get caught out by the conditions.
- **If you fall overboard or capsize, always stay with the boat for visibility and flotation.**
- **Tell someone else where you're going and when you'll be back.** They can raise the alarm with the coastguard by calling 999 or 112 if you are overdue.
- **Develop your skills.** Contact your national governing body, or your local club or watersports centre, to find out which training is best for you.

Find out more: [RNLI.org/safety](https://www.rnli.org/safety)



SCUBA DIVING



Target audience

Male divers of all ages, with an increased risk to those over 50, however 3/4 of divers of all genders experience safety issues while diving. An estimated third of fatalities are people with pre-existing medical conditions. More than half of casualties were diving alone or became separated from their dive buddy.

Motivations

Divers enjoy being underwater, seeing the marine world, socialising, relaxing and learning.

Attitudes to safety

- All divers have undergone basic training.
- Experienced divers feel safe so may be aware of but underestimate risks; they feel trained to deal with a range of emergencies and carry lots of equipment.
- While divers often recognise risks, they do not always mitigate them.
- Divers may be insufficiently aware of potential health risks, yet underlying medical conditions – particularly relating to cardiac health – are a key factor in incidents.

How to reach divers

- Dive clubs and centres are central to diving. They are the most popular source of information so are key sites for distributing safety messaging and giving targeted talks.
- Divers respect information given to them by more experienced and qualified people. They trust face-to-face sharing of knowledge.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Get regular health checks.** See a health care professional or a registered diving doctor. This is vital, due to a high number of non-diving related cardiac issues.
- **Be aware of diving-specific health risks.** Conditions like immersion pulmonary oedema (IPO) and decompression illness (DCI) may develop while underwater. Act early to ensure serious problems don't develop.
- **Make sure you have the right level of training for your diving.** It should include: dive planning (including checking the tides and weather), buddy checks, and visibility on the surface such as surface marker buoy (SMB) use.
- **Get training specifically for UK and Irish diving conditions.** This will equip you with the skills and expertise to dive safely. For example, the RNLI diver sea survival course.
- **Carry a means of calling for help.**
- **Consider carrying a personal locator beacon (PLB) in a waterproof canister.** Ensure your equipment is in service.

Find out more: [RNLI.org/diver](https://www.rnli.org/diver)





Target audience

Those who surf outside the black and white flagged areas, or outside of lifeguard hours.

Motivations

Surfers enjoy the thrill and adventure of their sport, and being part of the natural environment, with its unpredictability. Many enjoy the lifestyle, which values freedom of choice, as well as the culture and fashion.

Attitudes to safety

- The thrill of the risk is part of the appeal of surfing.
- Experienced surfers are more able to manage conditions (even when the waves are big).
- Intermediate surfers often stretch themselves and may get into situations beyond their skill set. Despite this, they feel safe when surfing.

How to speak to surfers

- Concentrate on how the behaviour change will enhance their motivations. For example, surfing between the black and white flags with someone else, and checking the forecast, will allow them to get the best waves, stay in for longer and surf more.
- Use surf shops, beaches and clubs to speak to surfers.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Always try to choose a lifeguarded beach and surf between the black and white flags.** If you can't make it to a lifeguarded beach, learn more about your chosen location before you go, read local hazard signs and seek local advice.
- **Always wear your leash.** If you get into trouble, hold on to your board. It will help you float.
- **Always try to surf with someone else, especially in big swell.** Surfers look out for one another. They can raise the alarm in an emergency by calling 999 or 112 and asking for the coastguard.
- **Tell someone where you're going and when you'll be back.** They can raise the alarm with the coastguard by calling 999 or 112 if you are overdue.
- **Check the weather and swell forecasts, and the tide times.** It is easy to get caught out.
- **Don't challenge yourself too early.** Know your limits.
- **If you get into difficulty, raise your arm and shout for help.** Even experienced surfers can get into difficulty.

Find out more: [RNLI.org/surfing](https://www.rnli.org/surfing)



TOMBSTONING



Target audience

Anyone jumping or diving from heights, such as piers, jetties, cliffs and bridges, without the supervision of a recognised coasteering provider.

Motivations

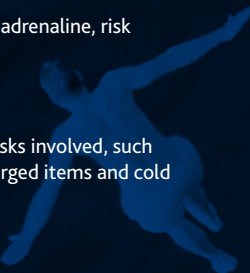
Tombstoning is a social activity, involving adrenaline, risk and thrill.

Attitudes to safety

Tombstoners are poor at identifying the risks involved, such as changing tides and water depth, submerged items and cold water shock.

How to speak to tombstoners

- Many tombstoners do not refer to themselves as tombstoners or any other collective name. They just see themselves as thrillseekers having fun.
- Concentrate on how the behaviour change will enhance their motivations. For example, using a registered coasteering provider will allow them and their mates to jump from higher and better places that others cannot get to.
- Use school and youth clubs to speak to tombstoners.



Is tombstoning the same as coasteering?

Simply put, no.

Coasteering involves scrambling, walking, and swimming to complete a journey along the coastline. It often involves a series of jumps into deeper water. There are providers around the UK with specialised training and local knowledge who are recognised by the National Coasteering Charter (NCC).

Tombstoning is a high-risk, unregulated activity where people jump or dive from height into water.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Don't jump.** Try coasteering with a registered provider instead. They will provide the necessary training and equipment to make the experience both safe and enjoyable.
- **Check for hazards in, on and around the water – every time.** Hazards such as submerged rocks might not be visible due to the state of the tide, so it is important to check the depth of the water.
- **Never go on your own.** Make sure you have a means of calling for help with you. In an emergency call 999 or 112 and ask for the coastguard.
- **Never jump while under the influence of alcohol, drugs or peer pressure.**
- **Check for access.** It may be impossible to get out of the water.
- **Tell someone where you're going and when you'll be back.** They can raise the alarm with the coastguard by calling 999 or 112 if you are overdue.

Find out more: RNLI.org/safety

WINDSURFING



Target audience

Windsurfers of all skill levels, particularly those who go alone or in adverse conditions.

Motivations

For many it's about enjoyment, adrenaline and competition. For others it's more about developing skills, the social aspect, or escaping out on the water.

Attitudes to safety

- They feel safe when windsurfing.
- Like to stay out for 'one more run' meaning they can be on the water fatigued and cold.
- Even very experienced windsurfers accept the risk that they may get into difficulty due to equipment failure, a common cause of incidents.

How to speak to windsurfers

- Concentrate on how the behaviour change will enhance their motivations. For example, carrying a means of calling for help while windsurfing will allow you to stay out for one more ride and enjoy yourself for longer. Or going with another person allows you share the experience, compete and develop each other's skills.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Always carry a means for calling for help.** Consider a personal locator beacon (PLB) - especially if windsurfing alone. It could be a lifesaver. **Consider taking a mobile phone with the SafeTrx app.**
- **Always try to sail with another person.** They can raise the alarm in an emergency by calling 999 or 112 and asking for the coastguard.
- **Tell someone else where you're going and when you'll be back.** They can raise the alarm with the coastguard by calling 999 or 112 if you are overdue.
- **Never sail out further than you can swim back.** Consider labelling your equipment with contact details so if it's lost the coastguard can check you are safe.
- **Develop your skills.** Contact your national governing body, club or watersports activity centre to find out which training is best for your needs.
- **Always wear a personal flotation device (PFD)** Make sure you're also wearing suitable clothing for the forecasted weather conditions.

Find out more: [RNLI.org/safety](https://www.rnli.org/safety)





What is the difference between a lifejacket, a buoyancy aid and a PFD?

A lifejacket provides enough buoyancy to support you in the water and is designed to turn you onto your back and keep your airway clear of the water – even if you are unconscious or a non-swimmer. A buoyancy aid increases your buoyancy to help you float but is not designed to turn you the right way up. Buoyancy aids are only recommended for people who can swim. Both lifejackets and buoyancy aids are types of personal flotation devices (PFDs).

Is it a legal requirement to wear lifejackets?

In the UK there isn't a legal requirement for leisure boaters to wear a lifejacket. However, in Ireland the law requires that:

a) appropriate personal flotation devices (PFDs) are carried on all leisure craft for everyone onboard; b) when a vessel is under 7 metres, PFDs must be worn; and c) people under 16 years old must wear PFDs when on an open vessel or on deck, no matter what size the vessel is. As of 2019, the law states that it is mandatory for all UK and Irish commercial fishermen to wear a PFD on the open deck, unless they have a risk assessment that shows they cannot fall overboard.

How do I find my location or describe my location to the coastguard?

If you are unsure where you are, first give a clear description of the surroundings. On some smartphones, the compass app will also display the position as lat and long, or use a location finder app.

What is the difference between a PLB and an AIS MOB?

A personal locator beacon (PLB) is a manually activated device that sends a distress signal through to the Cospas-sarsat satellite system, and then to a rescue coordination centre. It is Global Maritime Distress Safety System (GMDSS) approved. A PLB should be registered for free, with the UK Beacon Registry. A PLB has to be manually activated.

Automatic identification system (AIS) man overboard (MOB) is a personal locator device that works by electronically exchanging data with multiple ships and base stations via VHF. It is not GMDSS approved or monitored in the UK by the Coastguard, and is limited in range (around 5 miles in open water). An AIS MOB device can be rigged in a lifejacket to activate automatically with the inflation of a lifejacket.

How do I call for help by phone?

1. Dial 999 or 112 and ask for the coastguard.
2. Describe your location.
3. Describe the number of people and craft in your group.
4. Describe the problem.
5. Give any additional information.

Why have you included 112 – isn't it just 999?

999 and 112 are the UK and Ireland's two emergency numbers, there is no risk or benefit to using either number. 112 is the European standard number for contacting the emergency services and also works in other countries.

FAQS



Can I make an emergency call on my phone if I don't have a signal?

If you don't have any signal, don't panic! Your mobile can use any provider's network for emergency calls to 999 or 112. Some phones will tell you this with 'emergency calls only' on the screen. Even if the phone has no credit it will call. If you're struggling to make a call in an emergency, it's worth trying the phone on the other side of your head, as this may be enough to unblock the signal. You can also try sending a text to 999 or 112 (if preregistered) if the phone signal is weak, as a text may get through. Preregister by texting 'register' to 999 or 112.

How do I call for help on a VHF radio?

1. Press **BLUE** channel 16 button.
2. Press **RED** button to activate DSC alert if fitted.
3. Press and hold transmit button and say:
MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY
THIS IS ... (VESSEL NAME - 3 TIMES)
CALL SIGN MMSI
MAYDAY, (VESSEL NAME)
CALL SIGN MMSI
4. **MY POSITION IS ...** (describe position and give GPS location if possible).
5. **WE ARE ...** (describe the nature of distress, the assistance required, number of people and craft, followed by any further information).
6. Say **OVER** and wait for a response.
7. If no response - repeat procedure.

What's the difference between the coastguard and the RNLI?

His Majesty's Coastguard (HMCG) – commonly known as the Coastguard – is part of the UK government's Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and in charge of all maritime search and rescue operations in the UK. The Irish Coast Guard (IRCG) covers the Republic of Ireland. The RNLI works jointly with both agencies on rescues. If you call 999 or 112, or make an emergency call from a VHF radio and ask for the coastguard, you will be put through to an operations centre, which will coordinate the response and task the appropriate assets such as lifeboats, coastguard rescue teams or a helicopter to the incident. Coastguards in the operation centres can call upon coastguard rescue service volunteers based all around the coast, ready to respond 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The teams are highly trained with specialist skills to carry out water, mud and rope rescues, casualty care and searches for missing and vulnerable people.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) is an independent charity in the UK and Ireland. It's a 24/7 volunteer lifeboat service that is a declared asset of the coastguard to be tasked to an incident. It is the registered charity that saves lives at sea (since 1824). It provides an on-call, 24-hour lifeboat search and rescue service and a seasonal lifeguard service.

What is a Community Lifesaving Plan?

Every community is different. A Water Safety Lifesaving Plan (WSLP) identifies the highest risk activities within the local community so that relevant safety advice can be given to those most at risk. This is done through local community engagement, accident reduction initiatives and emergency response.

CORE MESSAGES

While each activity comes with its own specific risks and safety advice, there are a few messages that cover all activity areas.

Flotation

- Always wear a lifejacket or buoyancy aid.
- Know how to float in an emergency.

Calling for help

- Always carry a means of calling for help and keep it on your person.

Weather and tides

- Always check the weather forecast and tide times.

In case of an emergency

- Always tell someone else where you're going and when you'll be back.
- If you see someone in trouble call 999 or 112 and ask for the coastguard.

Find out more: **[RNLI.org/safety](https://www.rnli.org/safety)**

The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution, a charity registered in England and Wales (209603), Scotland (SC037736), the Republic of Ireland (CHY 2678 and 20003326), the Bailiwick of Jersey (14), the Isle of Man (1308 and 006329F), the Bailiwick of Guernsey and Alderney, of West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ