

2014 APPEAL

IN 2014, THE LIFEBOAT FUND'S APPEAL SUPPORTS RNLI CREW TRAINING

THE LIFEBOAT FUND IS DELIGHTED TO HELP THE RNLI BY PROVIDING THIS VITAL TRAINING IN 2014. OUR GOAL IS TO DONATE £280,800 – SUFFICIENT TO TRAIN ONE CREW VOLUNTEER AT EVERY UK LIFEBOAT STATION.

THE RNLI NEEDS OUR SUPPORT TO TRAIN ITS COURAGEOUS VOLUNTEERS – EQUIPPING THEM TO SAVE LIVES AT SEA AND TO STAY SAFE THEMSELVES. AS THE RNLI SAYS: "WE TRAIN ONE – WE SAVE MANY."

EVERY YEAR OUR COASTAL WATERS ARE GETTING BUSIER AND THIS MEANS, INEVITABLY, THAT MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE FINDING THEMSELVES IN DIFFICULTY AT SEA. 2013 WAS ANOTHER BUSY YEAR FOR THE RNLI'S VOLUNTEER LIFEBOAT CREWS, WHO LAUNCHED 8,304 TIMES AND RESCUED, ON AVERAGE, 23 PEOPLE EVERY DAY. IF THE RNLI'S CREWS ARE TO CONTINUE RESPONDING TO THIS LEVEL OF NEED, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO TRAIN NEW VOLUNTEERS AND TO PREPARE EXISTING CREWS FOR ALL THE SITUATIONS THEY MAY FACE. IN ORDER FOR THE RNLI TO DO THIS, IT NEEDS OUR HELP.



Photo: RNLI/Nigel Millard

Training is what turns a volunteer from someone who is willing to save lives into someone who can do it well and safely. Only 1 in 10 crew members joins the RNLI from a professional maritime occupation. The skills they need range from navigation to search and rescue; from being able to repair a lifeboat engine at sea to resuscitating a casualty in danger. Each of these skills can save the life of someone in trouble at sea. That makes training all the more important, but it all comes at a price.

TRAINING IN PRACTICE

Operated on a competency-based system, RNLI crew training is highly regarded in the commercial marine world. Volunteer crews train at least fortnightly on station and regularly at night in order to replicate real life emergencies. This training is supported by visits from RNLI mobile training units, distance learning courses and attendance at the award-winning residential RNLI College in Poole, Dorset. Progressive and specialist training means that crew members are assessed and can only serve on their lifeboat if they regularly prove themselves competent in all the required subjects. Once volunteers are qualified as crew members, they often remain with the RNLI for 20–30 years. Support for crew training is therefore a very worthwhile long-term investment, which helps to guarantee that lives will continue to be saved for many years to come.

IN THE CLASSROOM

Essential subjects such as first aid and navigation are taught in the classroom. It is also vital that boats and equipment are properly maintained and the college workshops offer hands-on experience in maintenance, repairs and rubberwork.



Photo: RNLI/Nathan Williams

If you would like to know more about this charity and how you can support it please contact thelifeboatfund@RNLI.org.uk.

IN THE WAVE TANK

RNLI crew training utilises up-to-date technology to ensure that volunteers learn skills in the most realistic conditions possible. At the Sea Survival Centre, a large indoor training pool helps volunteers practise inshore lifeboat capsize drills in realistic conditions.

The wave tank is equipped with a crane that turns over Atlantic lifeboats. Crew members are trained for the worst case scenario of being trapped under their lifeboat. Here, they release the sea anchor and position themselves so that the lifeboat's airbag can be deployed, righting her. In this way essential survival techniques – in darkness, and using a wave-generator – can be practised under controlled conditions.



Capsize training at the Lifeboat College.

AT THE STATION

RNLI volunteer crews lead busy lives with jobs and family commitments. Mobile training units support the training at the RNLI College, providing classroom facilities and lifeboat specific equipment to lifeboat stations around the country. Subjects covered by the mobile training instructors include casualty care, seamanship, electronic navigation and marine radio communications.

Regular exercises at the station, often every week, also help build teamwork, further improve competence and reinforce safety procedures. Various rescue scenarios are practised, some involving other emergency services such as HM Coastguard. Each time a lifeboat launches on exercise, crew members carry out various tasks to re-familiarise themselves with the range of equipment onboard.

A TESTAMENT TO THE BRAVE VOLUNTEERS

RNLI volunteer crews really are ordinary people doing extraordinary things;

"I HAD NO MARITIME EXPERIENCE BEFORE JOINING THE EASTBOURNE CREW. HOWEVER, ON ONE MEMORABLE CALL-OUT I SPENT 25 MINUTES IN THE WATER HOLDING ON TO A SEMI-CONSCIOUS MALE WHOSE YACHT HAD BEEN WRECKED IN A GALE. MY TRAINING SAVED A LIFE THAT DAY."

DAN GUY (MECHANIC, EASTBOURNE STATION)

It is RNLI training that turns these willing volunteers into highly competent lifesavers. For RNLI crews it is not a question of 'if' the call comes but 'when'. For some stations this may be several times a week, for others once a month. Some stations are busiest during the winter storms, others during the high summer. These volunteers need to be prepared for any eventuality, and they deserve the best training when putting their lives at risk to save others.

Of course individual training requirements vary according to experience, areas of responsibility, and the operational requirements of each lifeboat station. However, on average, it will cost **£1,404** to provide coastal training for each one of the 4,600 volunteer crew members this year; with added overheads for specific RNLI College courses. This is a substantial investment, but a vital one; the volunteer crews put themselves at risk in order to save lives at sea, and the RNLI owes it to them to provide them with the very best possible training.

In 2013 volunteer crews spent over 213,000 hours at sea. You can't put a price on that, but with your help The Lifeboat Fund is determined to play its part in giving them the training they deserve.

ON BEHALF OF THE RNLI AND ITS DEDICATED VOLUNTEER CREW MEMBERS, THE FUND THANKS YOU FOR YOUR HELP.