

With your support, RNLI lifeguards can continue to provide a seamless rescue service from the beach to the open sea

Imagine for a moment that you're an RNLI lifeguard on duty in the height of summer. The surf is strong and you notice a young boy in trouble, battling against the waves. Without hesitation you swim tirelessly into a furious rip current to help him. Your body is battered against rocks as you try to support his dead weight. You grapple onto a nearby rock ledge and perform lifesaving mouth-to-nose resuscitation as the surf crashes around you. You support him back to shore and, once you know he is alright, you collapse in sheer exhaustion. This kind of courage and commitment is displayed by RNLI lifeguards every day of the summer months. But they could not do it without the support of people like you.



Why do we need lifeguards?

Two out of three people in the UK will head to the seaside at least once each year. But every year around 7,000 of these people will get into serious difficulties. RNLI lifeboat volunteers or search and rescue helicopter crews can respond within minutes, and often save lives close to the shore. But sometimes, at the beach, seconds count. For a person to have a fighting chance of survival, they need someone on the shoreline who can see the dangers develop: someone who can prevent accidents before they happen and respond instantly if they occur. For this, we need lifeguards.

RNLI lifeguards, first established in 2001, now provide a world-class service on over 160 of the UK's busiest beaches. In 2010 alone RNLI lifeguards dealt with **16,664 incidents**, aided **18,779 people** and saved **107 lives**. However, their training and equipment is funded entirely by voluntary contributions.



Photos: RNLI lifeguards patrolling and performing first aid at Boscombe beach, Bournemouth, which is patrolled 365 days of the year due to the surf reef
Credit: RNLI/Nathan Williams

What the RNLI brings to the beach...

All our lifeguards join the RNLI with generic beach lifesaving skills. They then undertake a rigorous assessment and selection procedure and receive further training in rescue and lifesaving techniques and the use of other rescue equipment. All RNLI lifeguards also undertake pre-season and weekly training and are assessed monthly. The RNLI, as the charity that saves lives at sea, recognises that these high standards are essential if we are to achieve our vision - to end preventable loss of life at sea.

Signage

The RNLI provides 50% of the costs for safety signs on RNLI-patrolled beaches. These signs are located at or near beach entrances to advise users of hazards.

Patrol

Our lifeguards patrol and maintain a vigilant watch over guarded beaches from 10am to 6pm everyday during the summer and on some beaches through the winter.

Safety Flags

On the beach the RNLI provides a system of safety flags to define safe bathing and surfing areas.

Prevention and Advice

Our lifeguards provide on-the-spot beach safety advice to beach users, from advice on hazards (such as tidal cut off points and using inflatable toys) to moving the flags marking the bathing area in response to the prevailing conditions.

Casualty Care

Our lifeguards are trained to act as first responders to the ambulance service. They are taught to use defibrillators, administer oxygen, recognise and treat spinal injuries and prioritise triage as well as dealing with minor injuries.

Equipment

Our lifeguards are provided with high-quality equipment to facilitate their lifesaving work such as first aid bags, rescue boards and tubes, inshore rescue boats, rescue watercraft, and patrol and all-terrain vehicles.



A lifesaving rescue

'If it wasn't for the lifeguards on Woolacombe beach, North Devon, I would have been a widow at the age of 42 and our son aged 6, would have lost his dad.

Our day had started like any other, Gary was in the sea body-boarding, and Mackenzie and I had gone for a stroll along the beach with some friends.

Unknown to us, Gary had been pulled unconscious from the sea by a fellow surfer, having had a cardiac arrest. The RNLI lifeguards did four rounds of CPR to try and get his pulse back, and then used a defibrillator to effectively shock him back to life. Without doubt, if the lifeguards hadn't done what they did, and done it so well, there would have been a very different outcome that day.

As a small gesture of our eternal thanks, we have fundraised for the RNLI and it something that we will continue to do. The amount of times that we have sat on beaches and never really given thought to the lifeguards, other than to stay between the flags - you really never know when you are going to need them, and we thank our blessings so much that they were there.'

Amanda Noble, whose husband Gary was rescued by lifeguards two years ago



Two lifeguard rescues in Cornwall. Credit: RNLI/Nigel Millard

How will your support make a difference?

The RNLI has always responded to changes in the way that people use the sea, and our lifeguards are now an integral part of our lifesaving service. They work with the lifeboat crews to provide a seamless rescue service from the beach to the open sea. As 95% of the lifeguards' work is preventative, we'll never know how many lives have already been saved by their vigilance.

It costs **£504** to train each lifeguard, every year. Any donation, no matter how large or small, towards lifeguard training and equipment is invaluable in allowing our lifeboats and lifeguards to continue to work together as a team with one vision—to end preventable loss of life at sea.

Thank you for your consideration.