

# Blackpool's Seaside Safety Guide 2019

Prepared by Blackpool Beach Patrol

If you're heading down to the beach this Easter Bank Holiday it's a great way to spend your time relaxing as the beach and sea can be very inviting. There are a few things to remember before you hit the beach. Warm sunny days can be very misleading, with sea temperatures still very cold at around 10°C and seldom reaching 17°C on a hot summer's day. Compare this with our normal body temperature at 37°C this comes at quite a shock.

Whilst the beach is a fun and exciting place, it can also be dangerous if you don't take a few minutes to plan your day carefully. From being washed out to sea, pulled under by a strong current or simply misjudging the conditions when they are dangerous, it's really important to understand that every beach is different and has its own set of hazards.

- **Cold Water Shock**

The sea temperatures in the UK are generally very chilly, with temperatures below 15°C most of the year. If you suddenly enter water this cold at speed, your body can react uncontrollably making it difficult to breath and swim. To avoid this, make sure you enter the water gradually or wear a wetsuit to help you acclimatise to the temperature!

The RNLI's National Respect the water campaign recommends if you fall unexpectedly into cold water that you fight the instinct to swim until the cold water shock passes. Regain control of your breathing by floating to increase your chances of staying alive.

- Fight your instinct to thrash around
- Lean back, extend your arms and legs
- If you need to, gently move your arms and legs to help you float
- Float until you can control your breathing
- Only then call for help or swim to safety

- **Rip Currents**

A rip current is a body of water that flows out to sea and catches many water-goers off guard. If you do get caught in a rip, swim parallel to the shore and then back. If you can stand, wade, and don't try to swim. Rips are caused by the shape of the shoreline. Never leave your board / floatation device as this can act as a life line.

- **Tides**

The beach can seem like a huge playground, but the tide can change very quickly. This can often catch people unaware, leaving them cut off on a sandbank by the incoming tide. It's vitally important to check the local tide times before you spend time on the beach.

- **Changing Weather Conditions**

Complex weather systems and environmental processes work together to make our beaches change on a daily basics. The amount of sand moved by the tide each day is phenomenal. This process is directly responsible for the creation of sandbanks, gulleys, runouts, and beach pools. It is therefore important to be aware of fast changing surroundings.

- **Large waves**

Waves can be great fun, but they can also be dangerous. They have different characteristics depending on the beach and conditions - understanding how they work will keep you safer. Large dumping waves are the most dangerous to swim in as they can also knock you off your feet into deeper water.

## Beach Patrol Service

The Beach Patrol employ qualified beach lifeguards. Their role is to keep people safe at the beach, by offering practical safety advice to prevent incidents happening, and by physically rescuing those who do get into trouble if it's safe to do so. They are also qualified to administer first aid - from treating small cuts and grazes to performing emergency lifesaving treatment. The Beach Patrol work closely with the Coastguard, RNLI and other emergency services to assist those in danger.

## RLSS - UK Water Safety

### The SAFE Code

The Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) are very pro-active in trying to get water safety messages out. Whether you're at the pool, the beach, a lake, or by a river, use the [SAFE Code](#) to make sure that you enjoy the water safely

- **Spot the dangers** - each kind of water offers a different danger
- **Advice** – take advice
- **Friend** – always go with a friend
- **Emergency** – learn how to help in an Emergency

**Identified below are some safety tips to watch out for along the seashore, to help you make the most of your visit to the beach and to help you stay safe:**

- **Be aware of incoming tides and sandbanks** – be careful not to get cut-off by the tide when walking on the beach
- **Be aware of the waves** – waves are formed by the wind blowing across the surface of the sea. These can be very dangerous.
- **Be aware of the Sun** – Spending just a short time in the sun can result in sunburn, heat exhaustion or even heat stroke
- **Missing Children** – If you become separated from your child, try not to panic. Notify the Police or the Beach Patrol immediately who will conduct a search
- **Inflatables** – Do not use inflatables in the sea. It only takes a light breeze to blow an inflatable out to sea
- **Public Lifesaving Equipment** – such as lifebelts are placed at every access point to the beach.

If you do get into trouble in the sea, stick your hand in the air and shout for help, and if you see someone in difficulty, never attempt a rescue. **Call 999 or 112 and ask for the Coastguard immediately take a note of your location (all the access steps have a number eg BL055) tell this to the Coastguard.**

If a Beach Lifeguard is available tell them what has happened **then call the Coastguard on 999.**

Blackpool Beach Patrol works with HM Coastguard (HMCG,) and has strong links with the RNLI. These are the organisations responsible for preventing loss of life, continuously improving maritime safety.

Blackpool Beach Patrol is actively involved in assisting the RNLI develop a Community Lifesaving Plan for Blackpool. The team is also working with RNLI to promote the RNLI's national 'Respect the Water' campaign throughout the season to help make our beaches even safer.

Further information and education including the RLSS Rookie Lifeguard programme, Survive and Save Programme or the National Pool and Beach Lifeguard Qualifications can be found at:



[www.facebook.com/RLSSUK](http://www.facebook.com/RLSSUK)



[www.twitter.com/RLSSUK](http://www.twitter.com/RLSSUK)

## Your guide to **Seaside Safety**

### On the beach and along the prom

- Beware of incoming tides and sandbanks... they can cut you off!!
- Always read and obey the warning signs
- Don't interfere with Lifesaving Equipment, it's there for your safety
- Please respect our safety chains during High Water / Hazardous conditions
- Beware of Algae / Slippery surfaces along the Promenade, sea wall and steps



### In the Sea

- Remember dinghies & Inflatable's are not made for the sea and can be blown out to sea – so please don't use them
- Swim with others
- Don't swim within 50m of the Piers
- Keep within your depth
- Stay within your capabilities
- Check with the Beach Patrol if you are unsure about swimming



### Parental Supervision

- Stay with your children at all times
- Stay with your children in the sea
- Remember children can drown in a few inches of water
- Don't trust others to look after your children
- Don't try to retrieve toys/balls that have been blown out to sea or fallen over the sea wall when the tide is in.



### Don't Swim...

- If you've just eaten
- After drinking Alcohol
- If you feel unwell
- In the dark
- If the water is very cold, as swimming in cold water is dangerous



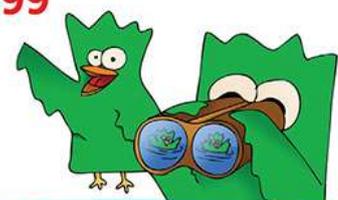
### If you get into difficulty

- Stick your hand in the air and shout for help



### If someone else gets into difficulties

- Contact the Beach Patrol or call 999 and ask for the Coastguard immediately



Throughout the new Promenade new signage has placed at various points where people may consider accessing the beach. Please read and understand all the signs for the part of the beach you are visiting so you know what the risks are and what you can and can't do.

Listed below are some of the hazards that you may encounter & highlighted on the new signs.

Red symbols are Prohibition; Yellow symbols are Hazards & Mandatory are in blue.

Please read, understand and be fully conversant with them as they are there for your safety.

At other resorts a flag system may be in place and overseas a traffic light system may be in place so be aware when visiting different beach resorts.

**An example of Blackpool's new promenade safety signs**



**Acknowledgements:**

HM Coastguard – Lytham & Blackpool

Safety on Beaches - ROSPA

Fleetwood Life Saving Club

Fleetwood Waterfront Life Saving & Surf Sport Association

A comprehensive Guide for Beach Lifeguards & Service providers - RLSS

A guide to Beach Safety Signs, Flags & Symbols - RNLI

