

6 ALWAYS SUPERVISE CHILDREN

In 2022, more than 1,400 children were either lost or found on the beach, so it is important to keep an eye on all members of your group and make a plan if you get separated.

KEEP YOUR LOVED ONES SAFE:

- Agree a meeting point, in case of separation.
- If the beach runs a children's safety scheme, using wristbands or tickets, take part.
- If not, consider other ways of affixing your contact details to your child.

IF A CHILD GOES MISSING:

- Ensure other children remain supervised.
- Calmly check your surroundings first.
- Contact the lifeguards or police, give them an accurate description of the child and what they're wearing – keep them informed.
- Let all searchers know once the child is found.



7 HOW TO DEAL WITH COLD WATER SHOCK

Cold water (below 15°C) can seriously affect your breathing and movement. This is known as cold water shock. Average sea temperatures in the UK and Ireland are 12°C, so the risk is significant most of the year.

BE READY BEFORE ENTERING THE WATER:

- **Check conditions** – including water temperature – before heading to the coast.
- **Wear a wetsuit** of appropriate thickness for the amount of time you plan to spend in the water and the type of activity you're doing. Ensure it's a snug fit.

DID YOU KNOW
Even on a hot day, the sea can be cold

IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING OR ENTER THE WATER UNEXPECTEDLY, FLOAT TO LIVE:

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



If you get into trouble in the water, remember to float

Learn more about how to float at [RNLI.org/LearnToFloat](https://www.rnli.org/LearnToFloat)

8 IN AN EMERGENCY: CALL 999 OR 112

If you're going in the water, you can carry your mobile phone in a waterproof pouch.

Always carry a means of calling for help.

In a coastal emergency, call 999 or 112 and ask for the coastguard.



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
Photos: Andrew Parish, RNLI/(Harrison Bates, Nigel Millard, Charis Walker, Nathan Williams)



Lifeguards

BEACH SAFETY TOP TIPS

Need-to-know expert advice for staying safe and making the most of your time at the beach



Scan the QR code and share this with someone you know



1 CHOOSE A LIFEGUARDED BEACH

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.



Find your nearest RNLi-lifeguarded beach at [RNLi.org/LifeguardedBeaches](https://www.rnli.org/LifeguardedBeaches)

2 KNOW YOUR FLAGS



RED AND YELLOW FLAGS

Lifeguarded area. Safest area to swim and bodyboard.



BLACK AND WHITE FLAGS

Never swim or bodyboard here. Area for surfing, paddleboarding, kayaking and other non-powered watersports.



RED FLAGS

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



ORANGE WINDSOCK

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

3 PLAN AROUND TIDES AND WEATHER

Before you set off, check the weather forecast and tide times. Always be prepared to change your plans.

KNOW THE TIDE TIMES AND HEIGHTS

The beach can seem like a big playground but have you noticed how quickly the tide comes in? Every year we rescue thousands of people cut off by the rising water.

To make sure you don't get cut off, check tide times. You can find them online, at the local harbour master or tourist information, and in some seaside shops.

And while you're on the beach, always keep an eye on which direction the tide is moving. Is it coming in (rising) or going out (falling)?

Weather and tide information can be found at [metoffice.gov.uk](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk) or [met.ie](https://www.met.ie)



4 KEEP INFLATABLES TO SWIMMING POOLS

RNLi crew and lifeguards rescue over 200 people swept out to sea on inflatables each year.

Blow-up toys and airbeds are designed for pools, not the sea. When you're on an inflatable, you can easily be blown offshore.



Inflatables can easily be blown miles out to sea

IF YOU DO CHOOSE TO USE THEM AT THE BEACH:

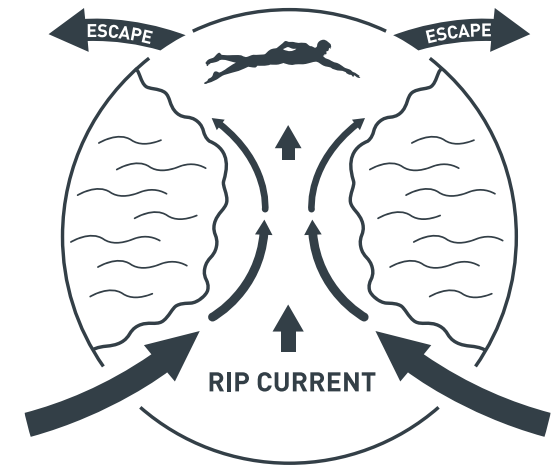
- Only use between the red and yellow flags.
- Follow the lifeguards' advice.
- Make sure children are supervised.
- Do not take out in big waves.
- Do not use when the orange windsock is flying (offshore winds).

5 KNOW HOW TO GET OUT OF A RIP CURRENT

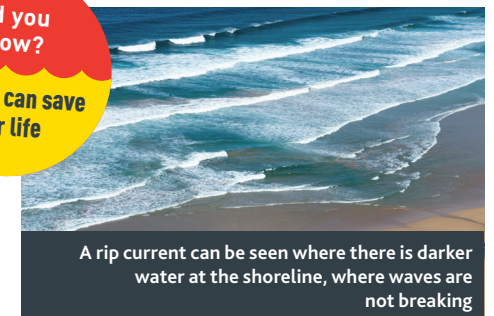
Rips are strong currents that can quickly take you from the shallows into deeper water. Avoid them, where possible, by swimming between the red and yellow flags.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE CAUGHT IN A RIP

- Stay calm – don't panic.
- If you can stand, wade don't swim.
- If you have a board, keep hold of it – it will help you float.
- Raise your hand and shout for help.
- Never try to swim directly against the rip – you'll get exhausted.
- Swim parallel to the beach until free of the rip, then use the waves to help you get back to shore.
- If you see anyone else in trouble, call 999 or 112 and ask for the coastguard.



Did you know? Floating can save your life



A rip current can be seen where there is darker water at the shoreline, where waves are not breaking