

## Beaches



To make sure you're as safe as possible, find a beach with a lifeguard.

You can ask a lifeguard for advice about conditions in the water, like how strong the waves are, and where it's safe to swim. Lifeguards also provide help if you get into difficulty in the water or on the beach.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) patrols more than 100 beaches in the UK during the summer months (May to September), and councils also provide lifeguards on some beaches.

If there are no lifeguards on your beach make sure that you're aware of the hazards and risks and how to avoid them.

Read the [Good Beach Guide](#) to see which beaches are manned by lifeguards.

*If you see someone in difficulty, don't attempt a rescue. Tell a lifeguard, or call 999/112 and ask for the coastguard.*

### Pay attention to the safety flags on the beach

When you're on the beach, pay attention to the flags and signs. They give important safety information about the area you're in, like whether:

- it's safe to swim
- the beach is good for surfing or using pleasure craft, like yachts
- there are any hazards in the area

### Red and yellow flags



These mark areas that are patrolled by lifeguards. These are the safest places to swim or use a bodyboard.

### Red flags



These indicate danger. Never enter the water when the red flag is flying.

### Black and white chequered flags



These mean the area is safe for watercraft, like surfboards and kayaks.

It's not safe to swim or use a bodyboard in these areas.

### Orange windsocks

If you see an orange windsock flying, it means there are dangerous wind conditions. Never use an inflatable boat or toy, when the orange windsock is flying - you could get swept out to sea.

### Other signs on the beach

Make sure you read and obey any safety signs you see at the entrance to the beach. These signs give information about what you can and can't do on the beach.

### A day out with the children

Make sure that you know where your children are at all times. Agree a meeting point in case they become disorientated. You may want to use local wristband schemes for younger children.

### Weather and tides

Always check the weather and tidal conditions before you set out. Think about whether you could become cut off and do not take risks; don't try to climb cliffs as a short cut back to the top.

[Check marine weather](#)

Information about waves, tides and currents:

[UK Hydrographic Office](#)

[RNLI](#)

### **Mud and sand**

If you become stuck in mud or soft sand spread your weight as much as you can. If you have a mobile phone, call 999 and ask for the coastguard. Try not to move around and stay as calm as you can. Don't let others try to rescue you - they could become stuck too.

Don't allow children to dig deep pits (below waist height) or tunnels in the sand - remember that at some point the sand will cave in.