



Maritime &  
Coastguard  
Agency

# Stay safe and have fun at the coast



# Follow these guidelines for a safe day out at the coast



## Check the weather and tides

You can find information on the weather and tide times on apps and at coastal tourist information centres. Some beaches give information on weather and tides at their entrance.

Take note of the times for high and low tides so that, if you explore the shoreline, you can get back before the tide comes in.

Pay particular attention to tides if you go onto sandbanks or into sea caves as it's easy to get trapped by the tide here.



## Lifeguarded beaches and flags

Go to a lifeguarded beach if you can. Follow the safety flags and the advice of lifeguards.



A yellow and red flag shows the area of beach that is patrolled by lifeguards.



A plain red flag means that it is too dangerous to go in the water.



The black and white chequered flag marks the area for surfers.



An orange windsock means that there are dangerous wind conditions.



If you see someone in trouble at the coast **call 999** and ask for the Coastguard



## Swimming, tides and currents

Swim or body board at a lifeguarded beach if you can and stay within your depth.

If you get caught in a rip current, try to stay calm by floating on your back with your ears submerged. Keep hold of your surf or body board if you have one to help keep you afloat. Once you are calmer, raise your hand and shout for help. If you can't get help, try to swim parallel to the beach until you're no longer caught in the current, then try to swim back to shore.

If you see someone else in trouble in the water, do not try to rescue them yourself. Remember Call - Tell - Throw.

**Call 999** and ask for the Coastguard  
**Tell** the person to float on their back  
**Throw** them something that floats



## Inflatable boats and toys

Inflatable boats and toys are very dangerous when used on the sea. A small breeze can blow you out to sea and into trouble very quickly. Do not use these at the beach.





## Keeping in touch

When you go to the beach, arrange a meeting place with your family or friends in case you become separated.

If you take young children with you, take a picture of them when you arrive at the beach to ensure that if they are lost they can be identified quickly. Keep children in sight at all times. Stay together to stay safe.

Always tell someone at home where you are going and when you expect to be back. Take a mobile and clothing to suit the weather.

If you or anyone else gets into trouble at the coast, **call 999** and ask for the Coastguard.



## Don't jump

Many people have died or been seriously injured after jumping into the sea from cliffs, piers, groynes and harbour walls. You don't know what lurks under the water and with changing tides deep sea can become a shallow puddle.



## Cliffs and coastal walking

When walking along coastal paths, always wear sturdy footwear and suitable clothing, as well as taking a charged mobile phone with you.

Stay well away from cliff edges and stick to marked pathways. If you take a dog, keep it on a lead at all times. Don't attempt to self rescue people or pets from cliff edges - call 999 and ask for the Coastguard.



For more information and safety advice, scan this QR code or visit **[hmcoastguard.uk/safety-advice](https://hmcoastguard.uk/safety-advice)**