Respect the Water (RTW) is the RNLI’s national drowning prevention campaign. It will play an important role in helping us halve coastal fatalities by 2024.

The campaign highlights the main hazards and dangers at the coast to help people realise they are at risk.

This year, our messages focus on three main risks that catch people out:

- **Cold water shock** can steal the air from your lungs and leave you helpless.
- **The water can be unpredictable**, with waves, tides and hidden currents that can drag you out to sea in seconds.
- Around half the people who drown never expected to get wet – many get caught out by unexpected slips, trips and falls into the water.

RTW@rnli.org.uk
The core Respect the Water campaign message is:

British and Irish waters are dangerously unpredictable.

The supporting messages are:
- More than 160 people die at UK’s coast each year, with a further 60 in Republic of Ireland.
- Over half of those who died at the UK coast last year did not set out to go into the water—slips and falls while walking and running contribute to most coastal deaths.
- The seas around our coast are cold enough year-round to trigger cold water shock, which will steal the air from your lungs and leave you helpless.
- Rips are powerful currents which can quickly drag even the strongest swimmers out of their depth.
- Men account for over two-thirds of UK coastal deaths.
- See for yourself: RNLI.org/respectthewater.
- #RespectTheWater

If you have any questions, please get in touch: RTW@rnli.org.uk
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What is Respect the Water?
Respect the Water (RTW) is the RNLI’s national drowning prevention campaign.

Over 160 people die each year at the UK coast with a further 60 in Republic of Ireland – around half didn’t even set out to enter the water. The figures show a clear gender divide, with adult men accounting for over two-thirds of coastal deaths.

So we are expanding RTW, using a harder-hitting campaign that will reach more people than ever before.

It will play an important role in helping the RNLI halve coastal fatalities by 2024.

Who is the campaign aimed at?
This year’s campaign will reach millions of people, but we are primarily targeting men aged 16–39 years. We know that this group is the most at risk so we want to speak to them directly.

What are we saying to people?
The campaign highlights the potential dangers of the water to help people realise they are at risk.

This year, our messages focus on three main risks that catch people out:
• Cold water shock can steal the air from your lungs and leave you helpless.
• The water can be unpredictable, with waves, tides and hidden currents that can drag you out to sea in seconds.
• Around half the people who drown never expected to get wet – many get caught out by unexpected slips, trips and falls into the water.

The core campaign message is as follows:
British and Irish waters are dangerously unpredictable

How is Respect the Water being promoted?
This year RTW will launch on Thursday 9 July and it will be the largest campaign the RNLI has ever run. You’ll see Respect the Water adverts in cinemas, on billboards and online, and you’ll hear them on the radio around the UK and Republic of Ireland.

If you have any questions, please get in touch:

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RTW has been developed using best practice from other successful public safety campaigns such as Think! and Fire Kills. We want to establish it as the nationally recognised water safety campaign in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

We want people – particularly adult men, who are visiting the coast or who enjoy coastal activities – to know what the main causes of coastal deaths are and understand that they could be at risk. We want people to realise ‘it could be me’, acknowledge the risks, and adopt safer behaviour.

Who is the campaign aimed at?
This year’s campaign will reach millions of people, but we are primarily targeting men aged 16–39, as this is the group of people who account for the largest number of coastal fatalities each year.

But it also targets specific groups of people who enjoy activities such as scuba diving or angling, or those who make their living on the sea such as commercial fishermen.

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- **Cinema Breathe advert** – This immersive and interactive short film is shot from the perspective of someone in the water. The film is a hard-hitting way of delivering the facts about the dangers of cold water.

- **Cinema Unpredictable advert** – Another film shot from the perspective of people in the water, with the camera bobbing in and out. This time, the cinema audience will see the dangerously unpredictable nature of the waters around the UK and Republic of Ireland.

- **Advertising** – This will carry important campaign messages and will be seen around the UK and Republic of Ireland from July. It will include adverts on trains, in male washrooms, and on billboards in coastal locations.

- **Pint glasses and beermats** – These are being used in pubs and bars in key waterside locations, with a message on the glass, prompting people to think about the risk of cold water shock and entering the water when in high risk areas or situations.

- **RTW goodies** – Your launch pack includes the following items: Pint glasses, beermats, bar runners, pin badges, stickers, RTW flags. Please share with volunteers or members of the public to promote the campaign.

- **Website** – It’s an interactive and immersive experience so people understand what it’s like to experience cold water shock and rip currents. They can watch the films, share with their mates or go to the RNLI site for more info on how to stay safe.

- **Radio** – Radio adverts containing the campaign’s safety messages will be played on radio stations across the UK and Republic of Ireland.

If you have any questions, please get in touch:

RTW@rnli.org.uk
BE A RESPECT THE WATER AMBASSADOR

Join the #RespectTheWater conversation
Your station or lifeguard social media channels are great places to begin a conversation about safety in your local area. Here are a few examples to spark the #RespectTheWater conversation:

1. Share your ‘Why I #RespectTheWater’ stories: Perhaps you or someone you know has had a bad experience on or around the water? Sharing stories like these can make people more aware of the dangers when they’re at the coast. You could do this with a photograph and a caption describing the story, or perhaps make a video. Here’s an example from last year’s campaign:

Why I #RespectTheWater. Alex Wake.
Senior Lifeguard: In 2013, a great friend of mine Jacob Cockle lost his life in the ocean trying to capture images from the inside of a whirlpool. He was one of the most experienced watermen I had met, being a great bodyboarder and highly valued surf photographer. He of all had the utmost respect for the sea and its unforgiving powers and his legacy should be a reminder to myself, my friends and everyone else however experienced or inexperienced you are. The ocean, she is a powerful beast that shouldn’t be taken for granted and massively respected by everyone.

2. Use RNLI infographics: Safety messages will be available to download on the RNLI website RNLI.org.uk/RTWresources. Share these throughout the Summer, especially around busy periods like bank holiday weekends and spells of hot weather.

3. Include safety messages in your communications: When reporting on rescues, think about weaving in a safety message. For example, to accompany a video of a lifeguard rescue:

‘A surfer caught in a rip current and unable to get to shore in rough surf conditions is rescued by our Bantham beach lifeguards. Rip currents can be difficult to spot, so if you’re at the beach this weekend, #RespectTheWater & swim between the red & yellow flags’

4. Make sure you always include the #RespectTheWater hashtag in your posts so we can see the content you are making and share it more widely.

And remember ...
Any of these ideas can be used throughout the year. Keep updated on the campaign by visiting RNLI.org/RespectTheWater. If you have an idea that you think could work well on social media, email the Social Media team: social@rnli.org.uk

Spreading the message plays an important role in helping the RNLI achieve its aim of halving coastal fatalities by 2024. Join us: #RespectTheWater