



WORKING IN SAFETY

YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDE



Lifeboats

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1.0 Introduction

The RNLI recognises that its staff and volunteers are its most important assets. The charity is obliged by legislation to protect its employees' health and safety when they are acting on behalf of the RNLI.

This duty is taken seriously by the RNLI, which has developed health and safety procedures and guidance to ensure that risks are recognised and managed.

The organisation will supply appropriate training. It is important to follow the guidance given to you when taking part in RNLI-organised activities.

This booklet is part of your induction process and you are asked to read it carefully. It complies with legislation in the United Kingdom and in the Republic of Ireland.



2.0 You and health and safety legislation

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (UK), the Safety, Health and Welfare Act (RoI) 2005 and subsequent legislation is aimed at securing your health, safety and welfare.

Study the safety procedures produced by the RNLI and comply with them to ensure your health and safety.

Don't attempt to carry out work of a dangerous nature, or operate machines, unless you have been trained to do so.

It is your legal duty to take reasonable care of your own health and safety and the health and safety of others who may be affected by your conduct.

You must co-operate with your employer on all safety matters.

You must not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided for your health, safety and welfare.

You don't have to pay for anything your employer is required by law to provide for your health, safety and welfare.

Remember that you will face the same penalties as your employer if you don't comply with legislation.

3.0 Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Executive Team

The Executive Team (ET) is responsible to the Chief Executive (CE) for managing corporate risk and effective corporate governance. It oversees the application of health and safety legislation and monitors compliance throughout the RNLI.

The ET is responsible for:

- an annual review of the health and safety (H&S) performance of the Institution
- ensuring that the H&S statement reflects H&S priorities
- ensuring effective H&S management systems exist
- ensuring management systems provide effective monitoring and reporting of the RNLI's H&S performance.

3.2 Health and Safety Committee (HSC)

The RNLI Health and Safety Committee (HSC) was established to promote matters relating to health and safety and to advise the CE and the ET on formulating, implementing and updating health and safety policy. A member of the ET chairs the committee and its membership represents all major RNLI sites and disciplines.

3.3 Your line manager

All employed managers are responsible on a daily basis for implementing the RNLI health and safety policy. This includes ensuring:

- all activities under their control are assessed for risks to the health and safety of visitors, contractors, employees and volunteers
- all staff under their management are adequately trained to perform the tasks required and are fully aware of any known hazards
- all staff under their management meet their legal obligations by complying fully with the safety measures instigated by the RNLI and not wilfully endangering themselves or others by adopting unsafe practices
- those reporting to them are aware of their specific responsibilities relating to health and safety
- the relevant divisional inspector or manager is consulted when in doubt on any matter relating to health and safety.

3.4 Staff

All staff are responsible for taking reasonable care of themselves and not endangering others.

They must co-operate with line managers to ensure compliance with safety duties. They must not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse any equipment.

All staff should report to their line manager:

- any work situation that is hazardous or potentially hazardous
- any apparent shortcomings in safety arrangements.

4.0 Health and safety policy

4.1 RNLI purpose

The RNLI's purpose is to save lives at sea. Fulfilling this purpose will sometimes place RNLI workers in hazardous circumstances. While recognising this, the RNLI also has a duty to its employees to minimise exposure to risk.

4.2 Aim of safety policy

The aim of the RNLI's safety policy is to strive to create an environment in which risk is properly assessed and managed and where health and safety awareness is high.

It is the policy of the RNLI to take all possible precautions for the prevention of accidents and the creation of conditions that safeguard all employees. To this end, the RNLI will allocate the necessary resources and enlist the active support of employees, upon whom duties are also imposed under the Health and Safety at Work Act (UK) and the Safety, Health and Welfare Act (Ireland).

The RNLI regards legal standards as the minimum that must be achieved and will endeavour to improve upon these standards when possible.

The RNLI aims to:

- provide and promote safe and healthy working conditions for all employees and to ensure that the safety and health of others are not adversely affected by our activities
- ensure compliance with all relevant statutory provisions
- provide and maintain safe equipment and plant

- ensure hazardous substances are used safely
- provide adequate information, training, instruction and supervision
- consult with employees on health and safety matters
- provide a framework within which our safety performance can be monitored
- develop safety awareness and responsible attitudes at all levels.

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary. Employees will be advised of any changes.

4.3 RNLI duties

The RNLI recognises its duties under the law. To meet these responsibilities it will strive to promote a safety culture throughout the Institution with the objective of avoiding injuries and minimising risk to:

- RNLI crews on exercise, service, passage, trials and public occasions
- RNLI employees at work
- RNLI volunteers engaged in the activities of the RNLI
- visitors to sites owned or occupied by the RNLI
- anyone else who may be affected by RNLI activities.

4.4 Staff duties

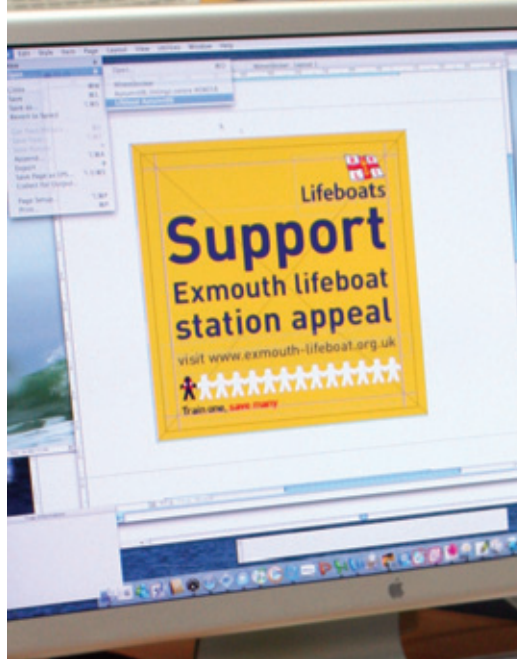
The RNLI asks for the involvement of all employees in health and safety matters. All employees are responsible for their own safety and for the safety of those who work for them.

4.5 Management of risk

Risk assessments and effective risk management will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992 as amended 1999 and the Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations 2005.

Based on risk assessments and risk management, appropriate safety procedures will be developed.

The risk assessment pack (SAP order no. 6-1537) *Guide to Risk Assessment* is available within the RNLI



5.0 Health and safety manual

More detailed guidance is set out in the *Health and safety manual*. The procedures in the manual must be reviewed and implemented by site management.

A copy of the manual will be issued to each line manager, who will keep it up to date.

Managers must ensure revisions are added to the manual as soon as they are received and that relevant staff are informed of such changes.

6.0 Personal protective equipment

Personal protective equipment (PPE) will be issued to you during your induction as appropriate.

Any items you are issued should be maintained and stored correctly. Any damage must be reported immediately to your line manager. The equipment should be replaced immediately.

Your line manager will show you how to use your PPE.

Those who require safety spectacles will be provided with them, as mentioned in the RNLI eye care policy, which can be found on Porthole under the Health and Welfare section of the HR Policy Zone, or contact your line manager.

7.0 Procedure when involved in an accident at work

Your manager or supervisor should be told immediately about any accidents at work.

All injuries, however trivial, should be treated by a qualified first aider without delay. Be sure to enquire who the local first aider is and how to alert him or her in the event of injury to yourself or any of your colleagues.

A small wound can be just as dangerous as a large one.

Your manager or supervisor should make sure that your accident is reported as soon as possible to RNLI Headquarters and recorded on the accident database.

Serious accidents must be reported to the enforcement authorities as soon as possible. The Health and Safety team will do this from RNLI Headquarters.

Even if an accident does not seem serious, make sure it is reported to your manager or supervisor. If you think it might have some ill effect in the future you should also speak to your local government office regarding welfare.



8.0 Dangerous occurrences

Dangerous occurrences are incidents that involve potential hazards but may not have caused injury. Some kinds of dangerous occurrences should be reported to the authorities.

If you see or are involved in a dangerous occurrence, report the facts as soon as possible. This might save someone from being seriously injured or killed.

The Reporting of Injuries and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 extends the list of diseases that must be reported to the appropriate enforcement authorities. Ask your line manager or contact the health and safety manager if in any doubt.



9.0 Fire safety

Under the Fire Reform Act (UK), the Fire Service Act (RoI) and the Fire Act (Scotland), the RNLI must ensure that its premises and company vehicles have a low risk of fire. Fire risk assessments have been completed for all RNLI premises.

It is important that any instructions given to you regarding fire prevention and evacuations are followed. Below are guidelines that can be used in most environments.

- Check that you know what to do in case of fire.
- Know the sound of your fire alarm.
- Know your escape routes.
- Keep passages, corridors, stairways, fire doors and all escape routes clear and unobstructed.
- Don't obstruct access to fire extinguishers. Learn how they operate.
- Don't hang clothing over or near heating equipment.
- Don't let paper, oily rags or other rubbish accumulate.
- Don't smoke in areas where it is forbidden.
- Use proper containers for flammable liquids.
- Handle flammable liquids at a safe distance from possible sources of ignition.
- Check for flammable material before using blowlamps and welding and cutting equipment. Check afterwards for any embers, smouldering material or other fire hazards.

- Crucibles, soldering irons and gas rings must be on non-combustible stands.
- Switch off at the mains any electrical equipment not in use.

9.1 Fire extinguishers

Check the whereabouts of the extinguisher nearest your place of work and make sure you know how to use it.

Make yourself aware of the types and uses of the extinguishers in your area. These are shown on a label on the case of each extinguisher and another label on the wall above it.

Water-filled extinguishers must never be used on electrical or flammable liquid fires.

Breathing any pressurised gas or powder can cause unpleasant and possibly damaging effects. If this happens get to fresh air without delay. Spaces affected should be thoroughly ventilated. When cleaning up the affected area, respiratory protection must be used.



10.0 Electricity

Under regulations relating to electricity at work, any work on electrical installations or equipment must be carried out by a qualified electrician. Unqualified people should not undertake work of this nature.

No electrical equipment is introduced for use on RNLI premises without first being checked and certified as safe to use. This will be carried out by an RNLI-approved electrician.

- Never overload electrical equipment.
- If a fuse blows, report it. Don't fit a replacement.
- Switch off and disconnect any equipment that sparks, stalls or appears to be faulty.
- Don't let cables trail across the floor. If they have to cross the floor use the safety covers available.
- Don't use lighting circuits for portable tools.
- Disconnect electrical equipment when not in use. Don't pull the cable to disconnect, pull the plug.
- Avoid twisting or crushing cables.
- Keep all electrical equipment clean and dry.
- Don't use portable tools near flammable liquids or gases.
- Don't stand on a wet area when using electrical equipment.
- Ensure that all electrical equipment is obtained from a reputable manufacturer, is sufficiently robust for the use intended and is checked by a competent person prior to use.
- Extension leads should be completely uncoiled. Don't use one with only a small amount of the lead pulled out.

- All electrical appliances and equipment should be tested periodically, generally on an annual basis. Some equipment should be checked more frequently due to the arduous conditions under which it is used.

It is very dangerous to touch any equipment or machine with an electrical fault. Report any suspected faults immediately and label the equipment or machine with a note saying it is faulty.

Remember: electrical repairs or alterations should only be done by a qualified electrician.



11.0 Lifting and handling

As part of your job, you may from time to time be required to move items from place to place. If you don't handle these correctly, you could hurt yourself.

You should organise the task to minimise the amount of manual lifting necessary. When lifting heavy or awkward loads, get someone to help but make sure only one person gives clear, unhurried instruction.

The following diagrams show how you should and should not handle heavy items.

Basic guidance for lifting:

- Establish the load's weight and stability and check the route you plan to take for hazards.
 - Grip loads with the palms of your hands, not your fingertips. Don't change your grip while carrying.
 - Hold weights close to your body, lift with your legs and keep your back straight.
 - Lift in two stages: from floor to knee and from knee to carrying position. Reverse this lifting method when setting the load down.
 - Don't jerk or shove as twisting the body may cause injury.
 - Don't let the load obstruct your view. Make sure your route is clear before you start moving.
 - If you have a condition or a disability that may limit your ability to carry out manual handling tasks, report the matter to your manager or supervisor.
- When pushing a load keep your arms straight and one foot in front of the other. When pulling a load keep your arms straight and your chin in. Place your weight on your forward foot, ready to move to your rear foot when the load starts moving.
 - Don't strain. If you think you can't manage a load get assistance.



12.0 Machinery

All new employees must receive training before being allowed to operate machinery.

Make sure you understand the instructions you have been given.

Guarding is not a convenience, but a legal requirement. Moving parts of machines have to be guarded. Guards are in place to protect you, not the machines. When they have been removed for repairs or essential maintenance a qualified person who has authorised their removal must personally check their replacement before the machine is restarted.

Everything possible is done to enable you to undertake your tasks safely, but your co-operation is essential.

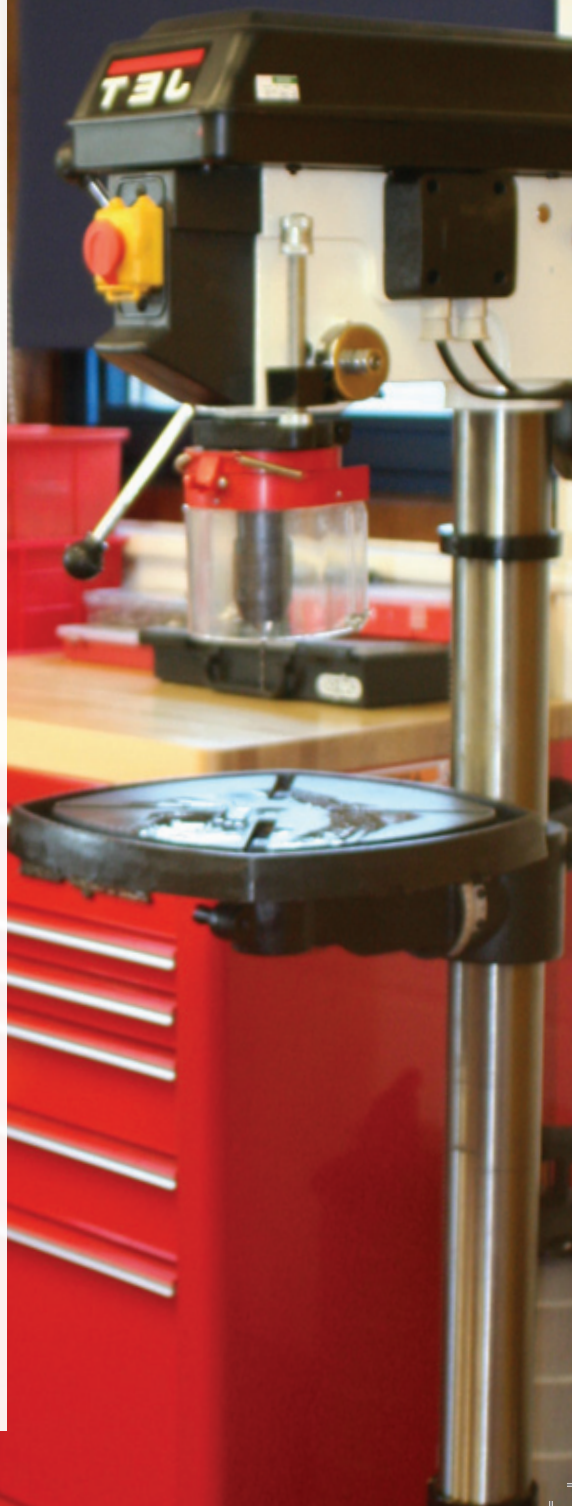
Maintenance engineers are the only people allowed to examine, adjust or lubricate unguarded parts of machinery in motion and even then only under prescribed conditions. Nobody else may touch moving machinery.

Wear suitable clothing. Avoid loose clothing, ties or belts, which can get caught in machinery. For some jobs safety shoes with steel toecaps should be worn.

When operating machinery, ensure long hair is tied up.

Wristwatches and rings have been known to cause severe cuts. You are advised not to wear them when working with machinery.

Make sure you know how to stop a machine in case of emergency.



13.0 Working in offices

13.1 Screens

If you operate any equipment with a screen, such as a computer, on RNLI premises for over an hour per day, make any necessary adjustments to your chair or desk layout. An area assessment should be carried out by your line manager, who has access to the appropriate assessment forms.

When working with a screen:

- the keyboard and screen should be separate
- the screen should be tilted to a comfortable angle
- the screen should be glare-free and its brightness and contrast should be adjustable
- the screen should be 60–90cm from the user.

13.2 Eye care

If you have your eyes tested and are told you need spectacles for computer work, the cost of the spectacles is covered in the RNLI's eye care policy. Contact the Human Resources Health and Welfare team for more information.

13.3 Cables

Cables should be secured in a safe way and should not trail across the floor unprotected.

13.4 Desks

Your desk should be tall enough for you to fit your legs beneath it. Its surface should be matt, not shiny, to prevent the reflection of light. The desktop should be large enough to allow any screen to be at optimum viewing distance.

13.5 Chairs

The back of your chair should provide support for the small of your back. Its legs should be sturdy.

The seat should be at the correct height to allow a 90° angle between your forearms and your body and a 90° angle between your thighs and your calves.

A footrest may prevent pressure on the backs of your thighs when seated.

13.6 Lighting

Artificial lights should be masked and should not reflect on any screens. Report any flickering lights to your manager, as they may cause eye strain.

Screens should not face windows, although blinds can help regulate the amount of sunlight in a room.

13.7 Temperature and humidity

Office temperatures should be 19°–22°. Humidity should be 40%–60%. If this is not the case, speak to your line manager



14.0 Personal hygiene

Washing with soap and water will reduce the risk of dermatitis and similar skin troubles. Barrier creams are available where necessary.

All traces of oil must be removed from your skin when your tasks are complete. Washing with soap and water at the work place does this best.

Special attention should be given to washing clothing that has become soiled as a result of your work. This applies particularly to trousers and underwear. Wearing clothing soaked with oil greatly increases the risk of skin damage.



15.0 Noise and vibration

In some circumstances, levels of noise and vibration can be high and you may be required to take appropriate measures. You will be informed of the areas affected by your manager, your supervisor or signage.

When there are high levels of noise you will be issued with hearing protection, either ear muffs or plugs. This personal protective equipment should be worn at all times when exposed to high noise levels.

When using earplugs make sure that they are inserted correctly and are a good fit. Clean them regularly, according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use disposable earplugs once only. Hands should be clean when handling all types of earplugs.

Earmuffs should be a good fit. You should ensure that they are worn the correct way around. Make sure muff seals are always in good condition. Don't alter the pressure of the earmuffs by bending the headband. If you have difficulty in wearing any type of hearing protector provided, speak to your line manager. Earmuffs should not be modified.

Hearing damage is cumulative and there is no treatment for noise-induced hearing loss.

Vibration is often associated with noise and may be reduced by using shock absorbing materials and suitable mountings on machinery. Direct vibration through vibrating tools can cause damage to bones and joints, in addition to other medical conditions, and all cases of vibration should be reported immediately.

16.0 Moving vehicles

Employees that drive during their activities for the RNLI are responsible for the safe operation of their vehicles and should ensure that they comply with all relevant road traffic legislation.

When driving on RNLI property drivers must adhere to any speed limits and traffic management systems that are in place.

Pedestrians must stay on footpaths and remain vigilant at all times.

16.1 Plant machinery

Only those trained and authorised to do so should operate plant, trucks and other specialist vehicles or mechanised lifting equipment. No one under the age of 18 should use the above types of equipment.



17.0 Special instructions for some roles

17.1 Chemicals

If you are working in an area where chemicals are used, risks will have been assessed and reduced to a minimum. You should, however, make sure personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks, respirators and goggles are used where indicated or advised.

You should check that this equipment is in good condition. If it is damaged, speak to your line manager, who will replace it.

Before using chemicals you should inform your line manager of any conditions that may become aggravated through using the substance, such as asthma or dermatitis.

To warn users of the hazards of some chemicals, symbols are displayed on their containers.

The following symbols denote that a substance can cause harm:



If you get splashed, wash with plenty of cold water at once and notify a colleague who can help you get the appropriate treatment.

Be sure that you are aware of the nature of the chemical you are handling. Data sheets have been prepared and they will help you with the substance's safe handling.

17.2 Compressed air

Compressed air can be dangerous if applied to the body. Don't play about with compressed air. It is not a toy and it can be very dangerous.

17.3 Eye protection

Safety goggles are provided and must be worn by anyone carrying out activities that may cause particles or substances to become airborne and hit the eye. Such activities include grinding, paint chipping, handling acids or corrosive materials, painting, drilling, welding and using equipment like pressure washers and blowtorches.

Every person provided with eye protection must ensure it is clean and free from damage and wear it when appropriate.

17.4 Ladders

A significant number of people have been injured or killed through the incorrect use of ladders.

It is essential that you understand:

- the extent of your own competence
- how and where to report problems with the use or transport of ladders
- safe working loads and work methods
- common causes of accidents and how to avoid them
- manual handling of ladders
- recognition of defects in ladders
- the use of fixed ladders as means of access
- how to secure ladders and the circumstances in which another person should be stationed at the foot of a ladder
- the dangers of using metal ladders near electrical systems
- that wooden ladders should never be painted

- how to store and transport ladders correctly
- the correct placement of ladders
- the need for three points of contact with a ladder at all times
- the ladder should be angled so that for every 4m in vertical height the base moves out 1m.

No member of staff should use a ladder unless he or she has been trained.

17.5 Scaffolding towers

Scaffolding should only be erected by suitably trained and appointed people. When working on scaffolding make sure that guard rails and toe boards are in place.

Make sure that adequate foundation is provided on level, firm ground with base plates and soil plates where necessary.

Instructions for the safe use of scaffolding are in the *Health and safety manual*, which must be consulted before scaffolding is used.

18.0 Maternity

Any member of staff who is pregnant, has given birth in the last 6 months or is breast-feeding should inform her manager or HR as soon as possible so that a risk assessment can be carried out into the work she does.

19.0 General advice

The advice in this booklet is given for one reason only: to keep you safe.

19.1 Personal awareness

- If you have to climb, don't use chairs, boxes, etc. Use a suitable stepladder.
- Don't carry any load too heavy for you. Make sure you can see over the top of any load you are carrying.
- Watch your step. Take care when boarding and disembarking from boats.
- Always use the correct tools and equipment.
- Don't indulge in horseplay or distract others.
- Wear and use the protective clothing and equipment provided.
- Always stack things correctly so they won't fall if disturbed.

19.2 Work place awareness

- Don't place obstructions on stairs or in gangways. Use stair handrails.
- Keep cables where no one can trip over them.
- Close filing cabinet drawers after use. Don't use filing cabinets that allow more than one drawer to open at a time.
- Use suitable knives and cutters. If razor blades are used they must be in proper holders.
- Rectify or report all unsafe conditions.
- Keep clear of cranes and hoists carrying loads.
- Help keep your work place clean and tidy.

- Use only the tools you are authorised to use.
- Don't leave tools on the floor or in a position where they can fall on people.

19.3 Good housekeeping

- Don't leave rubbish lying around.
- Keep all corridors, gangways and stairways clear.
- Wipe up any spills.
- Use metal containers for oily rags and waste.
- Stack goods clear of gangways.
- Stow your tools safely when not in use.
- Keep benches and worktops uncluttered.
- Don't leave loose tools on running machines.
- Remember: a clean work place means fewer accidents.

If you are in any doubt on any point concerned with safety or welfare, or if you have any suggestions for improving safety measures, ask your line manager or supervisor for advice.



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