

RNLI

The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea **Lifeguards**



Lifeguarding is synonymous with surf, sand and sun. Therefore it is really important that the lifeguards are aware of the risks of prolonged exposure to the sun and what they can do to minimise them. All new RNLI lifeguards are provided with important Health and Safety information for their job, which includes sun safety and this in particular is highlighted in their induction process. In addition RNLI lifeguards have a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) relevant to sun safety which explains the working practices that they are to follow, and all RNLI lifeguards have access to this. Risk assessments are also conducted for sun safety.

The learning outcomes of the Sun Safety Standard Operating Procedures include:

- Understand why sun protection is needed and what damage and harm the sun can do to lifeguards.
- Identify what signs to look out for while checking for signs of sun damage.
- Identify how to keep safe in the sun.
- Identify what equipment RNLI lifeguards are provided with to prevent damage from prolonged exposure to the sun.

The RNLI provides the following equipment to all lifeguard staff to keep safe in the Sun:

- Wide-brimmed hat
- Peaked cap
- Sunglasses
- Long sleeved t-shirts
- Sun Screen (SPF application)
- Lip Block

Steve Instance, RNLI Divisional Lifeguard Inspector for the South Division says;

'The nature of lifeguarding means they spend their working day exposed to the potentially harmful rays of the sun. For many their lives rotate around beach life, sometimes for 12 months of the year. It is therefore essential that they are given suitable advice within their training in how to protect themselves from both the short and long term health risks of sun damage.

They are provided with a high factor sun cream, hat, sunglasses, and parasols for shade, and given advice on how to make the best use of their breaks to keep out of the sun and to drink plenty of fluids.'

Martyn Fry, RNLI lifeguard supervisor in Bude, Cornwall who has been a lifeguard for 27 years;

'I have been working for the RNLI since it took over the lifeguard service in Bude in 2003, and before that for the council. Its an amazing job and I love being able to spend my working day outside. However unlike the beach visitors, I am not able to get out of the sun when it gets too hot, so it's really important to follow the sun safety practices the RNLI teaches us. I've certainly noticed that the lifeguards I work with now are more aware of sun safety and we certainly use all the protection we are provided with by the RNLI. It's also important for us to set a good example to members of the public using the beach.'

