

Stay Safe Along the Coast – A New NCI Coastal and Water Safety Initiative

Coastal safety is set for an extra boost this summer with the official launch of ‘Stay Safe Along The Coast’ from National Coastwatch.

As well as their traditional task of keeping a lookout for vessels and persons in distress on the sea and along the coastlines, NCI Watchkeepers will be taking a more proactive role in promoting coastal and water safety.

NCI stations which are public facing will offer practical safety support, distributing wrist bands for children to carry their guardian’s contact details so they can be quickly reunited, waterproof phone pouches, and stickers for owner’s contact details for paddleboards and personal watercraft.

The charity’s volunteer watchkeepers will also provide information on local sea and tidal conditions, and local weather.

Stephen Hand, National Coastwatch Chair said:

“We’ve been active in promoting coastal safety for some time but the official launch of ‘Stay Safe Along the Coast’ is an important step forward. We also work closely with all our search and rescue partners including the RNLI and HM Coastguard as we all share the same aim of keeping people safe at the coast.

"The help and encouragement we’ve received from HM Coastguard and the RNLI has been fantastic and to them we say a big thank you. We are also indebted to Trinity House for their generous funding which has helped to get this important initiative off the ground. Finally, huge thanks must go to our amazing volunteers, for their time, work and great enthusiasm in making National Coastwatch Coastal and Water Safety happen.”.

Of course, locally we also acknowledge the work and commitment of GAFIRS !

How can you stay safe when out on the water ? There are some simple rules...

Keep your vessel and engine well maintained

Wear a suitable lifejacket or buoyancy aid at all times

If your craft has a kill cord, wear it at all times.

Carry a means of communication – radio or phone in a waterproof pouch – and ideally carry a backup.

Ensure you have enough fuel on board

Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return

Check the weather forecast and tide times.

In an emergency, make a Mayday call on VHF channel 16 or dial 999 on your phone and ask for the Coastguard.

Some of these rules also apply if you are on the beach or swimming, but in addition...

Choose a lifeguarded beach and swim within the flagged area

Be aware of rip currents

Do not use inflatables... save them for the swimming pool

Keep a close eye on your family – both on the beach and in the water -and do not allow a family member to swim alone.

Whether you are in, on, or near the water this summer, do enjoy yourselves – and stay safe !