

Crew Training

Train One, Save Many

The RNLI – the charity that saves lives at sea – needs your support to train and equip our courageous volunteer lifeboat crews.

Every year our coastal waters are getting busier and this means, inevitably, that more and more people are finding themselves in difficulty at sea. 2010 was another busy year for our volunteer lifeboat crews, who launched 8,713 times and rescued, on average, 22 people every day. If we are to continue to respond to this level of need it is essential that we can recruit and train new volunteers. To do this *we need your help*.



Llandudno crew members in their everyday work clothes and, right, in their crew kit as trained lifesavers
Credit: Nigel Millard

Training is what turns a volunteer from someone who is willing to save lives into someone who can do it well and safely. As fundraisers, our call to action is simple - **when we train one, we save many**. Only 1 in 10 crew members join the RNLI from a professional maritime occupation. The skills they need range from navigation to search and rescue; from being able to repair a lifeboat engine at sea to resuscitating a casualty in danger. Each of these skills can save the life of someone in trouble at sea. That makes training all the more important, but it all comes at a price.



All weather lifeboat in heavy seas
Credit: RNLI

Training in Practice

Operated on a competency-based system, our crew training is highly regarded in the commercial marine world. Volunteer crews train at least fortnightly on station and regularly at night in order to replicate real life emergencies. This training is supported by visits from our mobile training units, distance learning courses and attendance at our award-winning residential Lifeboat College in Poole, Dorset. Progressive and specialist training means that crew members are assessed and can only serve on their lifeboat if they regularly prove themselves competent in all the required subjects. Once volunteers are qualified as crew members, they often remain with the RNLI for 20-30 years. Support for crew training is therefore a very worthwhile long-term investment, which helps *to guarantee that lives will continue to be saved for many years to come.*

In the wave tank

RNLI crew training utilises up-to-date technology to ensure that our volunteers learn skills in the most realistic conditions possible. At our Sea Survival Centre, a large indoor training pool helps our volunteers practise inshore lifeboat capsizing drills in realistic conditions.

The wave tank is equipped with a crane that turns over Atlantic lifeboats. Crew members are trained for the worst case scenario of being trapped under their lifeboat. Here, they release the sea anchor and position themselves so that the lifeboat's airbag can be deployed, righting her. In this way essential survival techniques - in darkness, and using a wave-generator - can be practised under controlled conditions.



Capsize training at the Lifeboat College
Credit: RNLI



In the classroom

Essential subjects such as first aid and navigation are taught in the classroom. It is also vital that boats and equipment are properly maintained and the college workshops offer hands-on experience in maintenance, repairs and rubberwork.

Classroom training at the Lifeboat College
Credit: Nathan Williams/RNLI

At the station

Our volunteer crews lead busy lives with jobs and family commitments. Our mobile training units support the training at the Lifeboat College, providing classroom facilities and lifeboat specific equipment to lifeboat stations around the country. Subjects covered by the mobile training instructors include first aid, seamanship, electronic navigation and marine radio communications.

Regular exercises at the station, often every week, also help build teamwork, further improve competence and reinforce safety procedures. Various rescue scenarios are practised, some involving other emergency services such as HM Coastguard. Each time a lifeboat launches on exercise, crew members carry out various tasks to re-familiarise themselves with the range of equipment onboard.

A testament to our brave volunteers

RNLI volunteer crew really are ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

'I had no maritime experience before joining the Eastbourne Crew. However, on one memorable call-out I spent 25 minutes in the water holding on to a semi-conscious male whose yacht had been wrecked in a gale. My training saved a life that day.'

Dan Guy (Mechanic, Eastbourne Station)

It is RNLI training that turns these willing volunteers into highly competent lifesavers. For our crews it is not a question of **'if'** the call comes but **'when'**. For some stations this may be several times a week, for others once a month. Some stations are busiest during the winter storms, others during the high summer. These volunteers need to be prepared for any eventuality, and they *deserve* the best training when putting their lives at risk to save others.



The value of crew training is priceless. But you could help us meet the cost half way...

Of course individual training requirements vary according to experience, areas of responsibility, and the operational requirements of each lifeboat station. However, on average, it will cost **£1,214** this year to train each one of our 4,500 volunteer crew members. This is a substantial investment, but a vital one; our crews put themselves at risk in order to save lives at sea, and we owe it to them to provide them with the very best possible training.

Last year, our volunteer crews spent over 10,000 hours of their own time at sea in active service, and at least 20,000 in training. You can't put a price on that, but with your help we are determined to give them the training they deserve.



Photos credit: Nigel Millard

On behalf of all our dedicated volunteer crew members, thank you for your consideration