



Lifeboats

News release

25 September 2006

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Busiest summer ever for the RNLI in the south west

RNLI lifeboats in the south and west have launched a record 701* times this summer. It means the volunteer crews of the lifesaving charity have been busier than ever in Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset during June, July and August. The three busiest stations were Poole in Dorset (74 launches), Torbay in Devon (59 launches) and Exmouth in Devon (50 launches).**

In Cornwall it was the Falmouth volunteer crews that launched the most times, putting to sea on 37 occasions. Weston-super-Mare's two inshore lifeboats were again the busiest in Somerset with 24 call outs, and the busiest station in the Channel Islands was St Helier.

As Simon Pryce, RNLI Divisional Inspector, explains it's the inshore lifeboats that have been the real work horses this summer:

'I often describe our D class and Atlantic class inshore lifeboats as the smash and grab lifeboats of the RNLI fleet offering a fast and rapid response. The volunteer crews that operate these lifeboats usually work close inshore, often amongst the rocks and surf lines. These lifeboats are ideally suited to the increasing workload created by those who use the sea as a recreational environment but who don't venture miles offshore. The D class at Rock in Cornwall is a good example. The station's launch numbers doubled this summer to call outs which reflect the huge numbers of leisure water users, including dinghy sailors, motor boaters, canoeists, swimmers and people cut off by the tide. There was an 18.5% increase in call outs for our Cornish lifeboats this.'

'The early part of this summer was idyllic which enticed many more people onto the water. In turn the RNLI charity is now providing a more tightly woven safety net for people taking part in a far wider range of recreational activities connected to the sea, from sailing to sea kayaking, kite surfing, and coast-steering. Some of these hobbies can be taken up relatively cheaply too, which is allowing far greater numbers of people to take to the water.'

- The RNLI is a registered charity that saves lives at sea.
- It provides, on call, the 24-hour service necessary to cover search and rescue requirements to 100 nautical miles out from the coasts of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.
- There are over 230 lifeboat stations.
- RNLI Lifeguards operate in the south and south west of England.
- The RNLI further saves lives through sea and beach education.
- The RNLI depends on voluntary contributions and legacies for its income.

Vision

To be recognised universally as the most effective, innovative and dependable lifeboat service.

Royal National Lifeboat Institution headquarters:

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**Charity registered in
England: 209603
Republic of Ireland: CHY2678**

'These figures highlight the importance of our sea and beach safety campaigns and our need to continue promoting prevention rather than cure. All this work obviously costs the charity more and an increased demand on the RNLI services, means we need more charitable support than ever before.'

The RNLI is a registered charity that continues to rely on voluntary contributions and legacies for its income, and receives no UK government funding. For further information about how you can help support the RNLI please contact the RNLI Regional Fundraising Office at Saltash on 01752 850680 or via email ro/sw@rnli.org.uk

ENDS

Notes to editors

- RNLI photographs are available from all areas mentioned above, and if you would like to organise interviews, photographs or filming opportunities please contact Tamsin Thomas on the number listed below.
- *Figures relating to the summer of 2006 are based on Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) search and rescue preliminary incident records.
**The south division of the RNLI includes an area from Weston-Super-Mare in Somerset, down the north coast to the Isles of Scilly, up the south coast to Mudeford in Dorset, and the Channel Islands.
- There are 34 lifeboat stations in the south west area, and these are home to 20 all-weather RNLI lifeboats and 34 inshore RNLI lifeboats. These are crewed predominantly by volunteers who give up valuable working hours to attend emergency call outs, thanks to generous and understanding employers.
- The RNLI's 'Train one, save many' campaign aims to raise money to train all its volunteer crews. It costs £1,000 a year to train one volunteer crewmember to help save lives at sea.
- Information and advice on all aspects of sea safety can be obtained by calling the RNLI on 0800 328 0600 or by emailing seasafety@rnli.org.uk

For further information please contact Tamsin Thomas, RNLI Media Relations Manager for the south, on 07786 668847.

www.rnli.org.uk

