



NORTH SEA VOLUNTEER LIFEGUARDS

CODES OF PRACTICE

**ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS AT
NSVL HEADQUARTERS, CENTRAL LOWER PROMENADE,
WHITLEY BAY, NE26 1AN**

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Contents

	Page
Beach Base	
Beach Base Normal Operating Procedures	3
Beach Base Emergency Action Plan	5
Beach Base Fire Safety for keyholders	6
Beach and open water	
Beach and open water operating procedures	8
Open water activity checklist	14
Boxing Day swim	15
Barbecue rules	18

Beach Base Normal Operating Procedures

1. Location of keys – Full sets of keys are held by all committee members. In addition, a set of keys is available to sign out for club Trainer/Assessors running a course over several weeks. Keys are not available to any other club members, if access is required a committee member should be contacted to open the base.
2. Signing in – All members and visitors should sign in on the appropriate page in the large diary.
3. First Aid Kits – There is one fixed to the wall in the kitchen area, another, with a spinal collar is kept in the main equipment store, along with the emergency blanket. Anyone administering first aid must fill in an Accident Report Form and submit it to any Committee member..
4. Telephone – There is no telephone in the beach base. Members should use their mobile phone or Channel Zero on the radio to contact the Coastguard. If emergency contact is made by mobile phone, the caller must remain outside to ensure the signal is maintained.
5. Electricals – The hot water to the showers needs to be switched on, likewise after use they should be switched off. All heaters should be switched off before the premises are vacated. The cable guard must be used in the training room to avoid a tripping hazard. Any piece of electrical equipment that fails to work or appears to be hazardous must be labelled as such and reported to the Equipment Officer.
6. Clearing and tidying up – It is the responsibility of everyone using the Beach Base to clear up as they go. In particular, in the kitchen all surfaces must be cleaned and all dirty crockery and cutlery washed. In the changing rooms all wet clothing should be hung to dry and the floor mopped to ensure safety. In the training room the furniture should be neatly stacked and any equipment used returned to the store. All rubbish should be placed in the bins provided and full bin bags should be placed by the bin at the top of the stairs.
7. Toilet facilities – The base does not have its own toilet, but there is one reserved for the unit users when the public toilets are closed. The key to this toilet, with a very conspicuous label, hangs behind the door to the kitchen and must be returned there after use. It is important to lock this toilet as it is not for use by the general public. The Equipment Officer is responsible for ensuring that the toilet is kept in an acceptable condition.
8. Use of manikins, AED Trainer and kneeling mats – All this equipment is available for training purposes by application to the Equipment Officer. The correct protocols regarding cleansing and use must be observed at all times. If any manikin fails to work, please report it. After use each manikin must be placed in the same numbered bag and storage slot, this is essential to stock control.

9. The shop – All goods from the shop are available using an honesty box.
10. Shortages and damages – These must be reported to the Equipment Officer as soon as possible so that remedial work can be undertaken.
11. Hazards – You should be aware of the following hazards:
 - Tripping hazards – electrical cables.
 - Slipping hazards – in the shower and wet changing room floors.
 - Hot water hazards – in the shower and washing up sink.
 - Boiling water hazards – the kettle and urn. To mitigate the risk of scalding, the urn must not be used when those under the age of 10 are present.
 - Low headroom hazard – in the lower equipment store.
12. After using the base – All electrics should be turned off, all equipment correctly stored, all tidying up completed, all lights extinguished, and all doors firmly locked with the shutter down. When left unattended even for a short period of time, the base must be secured, either by padlocking the double doors, or by pulling the shutter down and securing with the bullet locks.
13. Responsibility for left articles – The club cannot accept any responsibility for any personal items of property left on the premises.
14. Care of equipment – The club has invested a considerable amount in providing equipment for the delivery of courses. All trainers must include in the courses a section on the care, use and upkeep of all club equipment. Any member using any equipment for training purposes must ensure its correct use, appropriate cleaning and safe storage after use.
15. Security – The equipment store at the entrance to the beach base must be kept closed and locked when not in use, as should the downstairs store. The kitchen door should be closed and locked when those in the beach base are in the office/training room.
16. Use of Turning Point unit – The former Turning Point unit may be used for training when the beach base training room is use. After use, all electrics (including heating) should be turned off, all equipment returned to the NSVL beach base, the shutters closed and the keys returned to their storage location.
17. Fire safety – all beach base keyholders should see the separate fire safety guidance.
18. A list of current Adult members will be maintained at the beach base to ensure eligibility and insurance cover for the use of all equipment.

Beach Base Emergency Action Plan

1. Assemble outside the lookout.
2. Ensure a roll call is taken from the attendance diary.
3. If possible phone the emergency services, using a mobile phone or the phone box by the former Avenue Pub. The address of the beach base is 31 – 33 Central Lower Promenade, Whitley Bay, NE26 1AN. The Turning Point unit address is 34 – 35 Central Lower Promenade, Whitley Bay, NE26 1AN.
4. Ensure that a responsible person is sent up to the main road to meet the emergency services.
5. Do not re-enter the building under any circumstances until the all clear is given by the emergency services.
6. If it is not safe to re-enter the building, liaise with the emergency services, committee members, and other attendees to ensure that all those who may need further assistance receive it.

Beach Base Fire Safety for keyholders

As the responsible person for the use of the beach base you have legal duties with regards to the safety of those persons using the beach base. Before using the beach base you should be aware of:

- The fire protection systems that are present;
- How a fire will be detected;
- How people will be warned if there is a fire;
- What people should do if they discover a fire;
- How the evacuation of the premises should be carried out;
- Where people should assemble after they have left the premises and procedures for checking whether the premises have been evacuated;
- Identification of key escape routes and exits, how people can gain access to them and escape to a place of safety;
- Arrangements for fighting fire;
- How the fire and rescue service and any other necessary services will be called;
- Exit doors which are required to be in the open position are secure; and
- Checking that all escape routes are clear of obstructions and combustibles.

Before the any event or course you should decide:

- The arrangements for fighting fire;
- The arrangements for the safe evacuation of people identified as being especially at risk, such as those with disabilities, children, and visitors;
- Who will be responsible for calling the fire and rescue service and any other necessary services;
- Who will meet the fire and rescue service on their arrival and notifying them of any special risks; and
- Your plans to deal with people once they have left the premises, especially children.

At the start of any event or course you should notify all those present about:

- The no smoking policy;
- The emergency warning signal;
- Location of exits and escape routes;
- Taking only valuables immediately to hand but not to go to collect other belongings;
- The location of muster points; and
- What will happen after that (e.g. re-entry to the building).

During the event or course you should ensure that:

- Escape routes and exits do not become blocked;
- The no smoking policy is adhered to;
- No naked flames are started; and
- Noise levels cannot drown out the fire alarm.

You are responsible for ensuring that specific fire safety measures that have been identified for the beach base are followed. These are:

- Replacing bullet locks in the shutter and padlocks on the door when opening the Beach Base, and securing the main door open using the padlock provided.
- Ensuring the equipment store is kept closed and locked at all times when not in use.
- Ensuring the kitchen door is kept closed and secured using the codelock when the kitchen area is unattended.
- Ensuring that all rubbish is bagged and placed at the top of the steps at the end of the day.
- Ensuring that no rubbish or any other items are left unattended in or immediately outside the entrance lobby at any time.
- Ensuring all personal belongings are removed from the bench outside the office at the end of the day.

Beach and open water operating procedures

Patrol Area

The normal training and assessment area will extend from Watts Slope in the north to a line due east from the promenade clock in the south. The whole of the Central Lower Promenade and beach area will be included, but lifeguards/trainees should not be expected to be more than 200m from the shore and in most instances will be considerably closer in.

This area has not been split into zones, although zones could be created as appropriate to a particular training session by the Trainer/Assessor in charge. This may be necessary when rescue boards and/or surf skis are in use but will depend on factors such as the number of participants and sea conditions.

Access

The Central Lower Promenade is accessible from the Upper Promenade via:

- The semi-circular set of steps beside the promenade clock
- The ramp opposite North Parade
- The steps opposite Brook Street Gardens

These are all pedestrian routes, although the ramp could be used by a stretcher trolley

The beach is accessible from the Central Lower Promenade via:

- Steps opposite South Parade
- A ramp which is an effective continuation of the ramp in the above paragraph
- A double set of steps approximately mid way along the Central Lower Promenade
- A single set of steps opposite the N.S.V.L. training centre

These are all pedestrian routes, although the ramp could be used by a stretcher trolley

The beach is directly accessible from the Upper Promenade via:

- Two long sets of steps between the north of the Central Lower Promenade and Watts Slope
- Watts Slope itself.

The steps are pedestrian access only, but Watts Slope is accessible both by pedestrians and by vehicles. N.B. Only suitable vehicles (e.g. 4 wheel drive) should attempt to drive onto the sand.

There is access to the sea along full length of the patrol area.

Hazards

All access steps and ramps from time to time become covered with amounts of sand, litter and broken glass. Care must be taken by all when negotiating the accesses. If in the opinion of the person in charge of the session, the hazard represents a serious risk of injury, steps will be taken to remove the hazard using brush/ shovel as appropriate.

The topography of the beach changes on an almost daily basis, leading to changes in location and size of sandbanks, currents and depth of water available. This should form part of a pre-session risk assessment.

The access ramp leading to the boathouse does not have any sides and those on the ramp could fall off it onto the beach below. Depending on the amount of sand onto the beach, it could be a short fall onto sand, or a longer fall onto pebbles and rocks. The likely injury would be a twisted ankle.

All those who use the downstairs equipment store could be injured as the height of the door is relatively low. Depending on the severity knock and where it takes place, the scope of the injury could vary dramatically.

The iron beams that support the roof are covered in masonry which is loose. Falling masonry could result in a head injury or worse, depending on the nature of the falling masonry.

Those putting the boards on or off the racks. Most boards are at a low level but some are at a high level. Potential injuries are twisting injuries from the strain of getting them on or off, or suffering an injury from a board hitting the person taking it on or off.

The surface of the beach may conceal other hazards such a broken glass, sharp stones or discarded needles. No one should be on the beach without suitable protective footwear.

At the south end of the beach are rocks that are uncovered at low tide and provide a slip and trip hazard. As the tide rises people could be stranded, particularly in the small inlet below the promenade clock.

The Half Moon rocks, situated opposite Ocean View, similarly provided slip and trip and stranding hazards.

Just to the north of the Half Moon Rocks and just beyond the outer edge is a permanent sandbank that only uncovers at the lowest tides. The channel between this sandbank and the main beach varies in depth, which sometimes can be quite considerable.

Seawards from this is a large kelp bed that is an entanglement hazard at low tide.

Other natural hazards are the weather, tides and the height of the waves.

People, children and dogs can also be obstruction hazards when involved in training situations.

Improper use of lifeguard/lifesaving equipment, or use by those with insufficient training can also be a hazard.

Public Rescue Equipment

Life saving rings with rope attached should be available at each end of the Central Lower Promenade and at the bottom of Watts Slope. These should only be used as a last resort.

Flags

Flags will not normally be flown during club only training/assessing sessions, unless specifically called for under the instruction of the Trainer/Assessor in charge.

Uniform of lifeguards/trainees

All will wear personal clothing that is within the club dress code and appropriate to the conditions (e.g. wet suits, gloves and hoods in cold conditions). During open water training/assessing sessions this will be a minimum of swimwear, suitable footwear, brightly coloured hat and a rash vest according to the following list:

- Trainer/Assessors – Red
- Qualified Lifeguards – Yellow
- Trainees – Blue

Equipment

All lifeguards/trainees will carry with them at all times during the training session a torpedo buoy and whistle. These are provided by the clubs and the torpedo buoys will have a whistle attached. Torpedo buoys will only be discarded when carrying out rescues with a paddle board or surf ski, acting as a casualty, or when instructed to do so by the Trainer/Assessor in charge.

Other equipment that may be used during training sessions includes: paddle board, surf ski, radio, throw bag/rope, rescue pole, trauma bag, “Stifneck” collars, resuscitation manikins, swim fins, etc.

Teamwork

For the purposes of training exercises, the normal team will consist of four trainees, one of which will be nominated as “senior”. If there are more than four trainees, they will normally be split into multiple groups of four.

First Aid

The Trauma bag and its’ associated “Stifneck” collar that normally hangs on the back of the equipment store door should be taken onto the beach during all training sessions.

There are also first aid kits in the kitchen area on the wall and in the Office.

A variety of blankets is also available for hypothermia cases.

Maintenance/Replacement

At the end of each training/assessing session, the Trainer/Assessor in charge shall ensure that if there has been any damage or consumption of materials, the appropriate form is completed and left in the Equipment Officers in tray so that repair/replacement can be completed.

Actual Incidents

If an actual incident occurs during a training session outside of North Tyneside Council lifeguard duty hours, the training should cease and the Trainer/Assessor in charge of the session should take charge utilising whatever resources are necessary and available to deal with the incident to completion, including liaison with other agencies and the completion of the necessary reports and accident forms.

If an actual incident occurs during North Tyneside Council lifeguard duty hours, training should cease and the Trainer/Assessor in charge should offer assistance to the senior lifeguard on duty.

Dealing with the public

This is best left to the Trainer/Assessor in charge of the session unless answering simple questions of general interest. In the case of a query concerning North Tyneside Council lifeguards, refer the member of the public to the Senior Lifeguard. In the case of a complaint against the club or any member, refer to any committee member present. If none are present, take details of the complaint without prejudice and/or give the complainant the name and address of the Club Secretary and ask them to put their complaint in writing so that it can be dealt with.

Avoid confrontation, admission of responsibility or argument.

Beach games

Before starting beach games, the person in charge of the session should ensure that the area to be used is checked for any items that could cause harm, such as stones or glass. Where practical the area should be raked. All participants should be advised to wear footwear.

Those in charge of the session should also refer to the specific risk assessments for the games to be aware of the control measures they must enforce.

General responsibilities

All trainees are responsible for ensuring that:

- The trainer is notified of any medical conditions they have which may affect their competency in open water, including details of medication taken.
- The trainer is updated in any change to their medical conditions and/or medication taken.
- They are wearing suitable clothing for the training session, including protective footwear (not provided by NSVL) and a red and yellow quartered beanie (provided by NSVL).
- Emergency contact information is recorded on a card and placed in the box containing the other emergency contact cards.
- They remain with other trainees as far as possible during the open water activity – within view and easy hearing distance.
- They check equipment is in good working order prior to use.
- Before taking any equipment into the water, they are comfortable with using the equipment in the water conditions prevailing at the time.
- Buoyancy aids and helmets are worn when using surf skis.
- If they feel the effects of the cold, to leave the water before getting any colder.
- If they feel the conditions are too dangerous for them to safely participate, to leave the water.
- All instructions given by the trainer and/or lifeguards are followed.
- Their name is written on the whiteboard by the kitchen door. This is so a comprehensive list of those in the water is maintained at all times.

In addition to general trainee responsibilities, all those taking part in sessions outside of a structured course setting are responsible for ensuring that:

- Sufficient safety cover in the form of qualified RLSS Beach Lifeguards is available for the session.
- The Coastguard is notified that training is taking place, and notified again when training is finished.

All trainers must ensure that:

- Trainees have a level of swimming ability to allow safe participation in the open water environment.
- They hold the relevant qualification for the training activity being carried out.
- Sufficient safety cover, in the form of qualified RLSS Beach Lifeguards, is available for the session, taking sea conditions, trainee numbers, and planned activities into account.
- A basic lesson plan is drawn up and shared with the safety cover.
- Activities are planned to keep trainees as close to each other in the water as possible.
- The Coastguard is notified that training is taking place, and notified again when training is finished.
- The water is cleared of trainees if an incident arises that the lifeguards need to respond to.

All lifeguards acting as safety cover must ensure that:

- They hold an up-to-date RLSS Beach Lifeguard qualification.
- They are satisfied that the level of safety cover is sufficient for the number of trainees and activities to be carried out.
- They have the correct equipment to provide adequate safety cover including both rescue and first aid equipment. At minimum this will be torpedo buoy, radio, whistle and trauma bag, but other equipment may be necessary depending on trainee numbers, sea conditions and planned activities.
- Any equipment used is in good working order.
- The session is terminated if they feel it is unsafe to continue.
- If an incident arises, they ask the trainer to clear the water of trainees, and maintain adequate supervision until all trainees not in the incident have reached a point of safety. The Coastguard should also be informed by using Channel 0 on the radio, and updated as necessary.

Open water activity checklist

This checklist is reproduced in the beach base and is designed to summarise the key things that need to be done before entering the water and after exiting the water.

Before entering the water:

- All participants are paid-up NSVL members
- Trainer is aware of any medical conditions
- Names of lifeguards and trainees on white board
- Contact Coastguard before entering water
- Steps – are they safe and relatively sand free?
- Qualified lifeguards on duty
- Protective foot wear
- Brightly coloured head wear
- Torpedo buoys/whistles
- Bump hat/buoyancy aid if using surf ski

After exiting the water:

- Check that all have exited water and inform Coastguard
- All equipment to be thoroughly rinsed and stored
- Damages/shortages to be notified in writing
- Clean white board
- Tidy and mop changing rooms

Boxing Day swim

Advice to swimmers to be included in the Boxing Day information on the NSVL web site

The web site will include information advising swimmers to:

- Wear protective footwear
- Only stay in the water for as long as they feel comfortable with
- Obey the instructions of lifeguards and marshals

Lifeguard brief

General:

- To cover the beach we need 4 lifeguards on duty
- An area 50m long for entering the sea will be marked out with a prominent marker at both the north end and south end
- The lifeguards will wear wet suits, boots, yellow rash vests and high visibility hats. They will carry torpedo buoys, radios and whistles.

For Boxing Day only the call signs will be:

- Whitley North
- Whitley Centre- If qualified, must be the captain
- Whitley South
- Whitley First Aid
- Whitley Rescue (Paddleboard)

Lifeguard whistle systems should not be used unless necessary, if so these are :-

1. Attract attention of a bather
2. Attract attention of another lifeguard/first aider
3. Indicates a lifeguard is taking emergency action

And one long blast will be used to clear the water either in an emergency or at the end of the session. At no other point must a whistle be used. Any announcements can be made by the megaphone instead.

The lifeguards will position themselves for static observation before the swimmers go down to the beach. One at the northernmost point, one at the southernmost point and one in the centre of the designated area, and, depending on conditions, one at the back on a rescue board. If the conditions are too rough for a board this lifeguard must undertake mobile patrol along the shoreline. Their call sign will remain the same to avoid confusion.

The aim of the lifeguards must be to:-

- To ensure the safety of the swimmers, and in particular be on the lookout for any showing distress and in difficulties
- To ensure that the swimmers stay within the designated area
- To ensure that nobody stays in the water for longer than 15 minutes – they will sound a signal to indicate that it is time to leave the water- Mega phone/one long whistle blast

- To constantly watch out for anyone showing signs of hypothermia and if so to request them to leave the water as soon as possible and to get warmed up- request assistance from first aiders if necessary.

In an emergency

The lifeguard who becomes aware of the situation must:-

- Alert the lifeguard team
- Direct the most appropriately positioned lifeguard to the incident or initiated rescue themselves

The Lifeguard Captain must:-

- If necessary clear the water of users
- Once the casualty is landed, they will be handed over to the first aid team who will have made their way to the beach.
- If the Captain initiates the rescue, the nearest lifeguard to their position will clear the water if necessary.

Callsign Whitley Rescue must:-

- If on the board, return to shore immediately, and take the place of the lifeguard who has left their position
- If on mobile, will do the same
- If they are the rescuing/responding lifeguard all other lifeguards will stay at their positions unless involved

For serious incidents (such as unconscious casualties or spinal casualties)

- The situation must be handled as per the RLSS NBLQ manual currently dictates.
- As the water will definitely have been cleared the casualty is then the responsibility not of the first aiders but of the lifeguard team.
- The first aiders will then need to ensure everyone else is changed, dry and safe from hypothermia or other conditions.
- If it is necessary to contact the coastguard for whatever reason this must be done by the lifeguard captain

The lifeguards will not enter the sea under normal circumstances. They are NOT participants in the Boxing Day Swim they are the safety cover for it.

Radios are for relative information only during the swim, these will also be tested between all call signs, including first aid, BEFORE swimmers are allowed on the beach.

This is a high profile event with cameras trained on whatever is going on. We must avoid negative publicity at all costs.

Announcer's brief

- All swimmers to register before entering the water.
- All swimmers advised to wear protective footwear.
- Female change in NSVL.
- Male change in North Tyneside Council base.
- Follow me onto the beach at 10.55.
- Wait until word is given and then turn for photographers (keep together for better picture).
- Maximum time in the water is 15 minutes, but it is not a competition.
- If you feel really cold leave the water and change.
- Hot drinks and soup available after the swim.
- Take notice of lifeguards as they are there for your safety.
- Certificates will be handed out at 11.30.

Barbecue rules

1. BBQs to be approved in advance by committee, who will appoint persons 18 years or over as Organiser and Head Cook. These tasks could be undertaken by two people
2. Head cook to be in charge and responsible for:-
 - a. Check positioning of BBQ.
 - b. Lighting the BBQ
 - c. Organising cooks
 - d. Issuing cooking implements and PPE
 - e. Issuing warnings re hygiene, cross contamination and thorough cooking of food
 - f. Safe closure and storage of BBQs at end of cooking
3. No under 18s to use the BBQ.
4. No children under the age of 18 to be given cooking or firewatching duties of any kind.
5. A rota of BBQ cooks will be agreed before the BBQ by the committee.
6. No person not appointed by the committee to be allowed to cook on the BBQ (this ensures that these roles are properly discussed and agreed before the BBQ).
7. The Head Cook will have the authority to remove any person from the rota that he/she believes is not capable of performing BBQ tasks on the day.