



Lifeboats



Aquatic Survival Programme Implementation Guide

DECEMBER 2023

DEVELOPED FOR LOW-RESOURCE AREAS

About this guide

The primary aim of the *Aquatic Survival Programme Implementation Guide* is to provide organisations with practical suggestions and advice, to assist them with the safe implementation of the Aquatic Survival programme.

This resource has been designed as a guidance document and can be adapted to suit the local environment.

This guide will be reviewed and, if necessary, updated every 3 years.

Please send any feedback or comments to international@rnli.org.uk.

Please refer to:

<https://rnli.org/what-we-do/international/international-resources>

for the latest version of this handbook.

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PREVENTION



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Anyone can drown,
no one should.

Disclaimer

The content of this book is for general guidance only. It represents best practice as at the date of publication and should not be considered as legal advice. Those using this guide should seek professional advice as and when necessary. The RNLI does not accept responsibility for any errors in this document.

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Learning outcomes

- 1.1 Understand the global drowning issue.
- 1.2 Understand why there is an Aquatic Survival programme.
- 1.3 Understand the role of an Aquatic Survival programme.
- 1.4 Understand the role of the RNLI and its international work.
- 1.5 Understand the role of the Aquatic Survival working group.
- 1.6 Understand what the Aquatic Survival programme is.

1.1 The international drowning problem

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that drowning is responsible for the loss of an around 236,000 lives each year (2020). This figure is likely to be a significant underestimation as it excludes drowning deaths due to flooding, transportation, and intentional drowning deaths.

The WHO estimation also relies on data collected from poor reporting systems, which often under-represent or misrepresent drowning deaths.

Despite the scale of the problem, drowning is barely recognised as a public health problem – a silent epidemic that is significantly under- resourced.

The WHO created the following information in 2021 on global drowning:

KEY FACTS

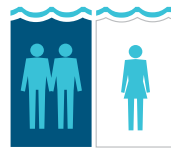
**AT LEAST
236,000**
people die
EVERY YEAR



OVER HALF
of all drowning
deaths are
among those
aged
**UNDER 30
YEARS**



**MALES
ARE TWICE
AS LIKELY**
to drown as
females



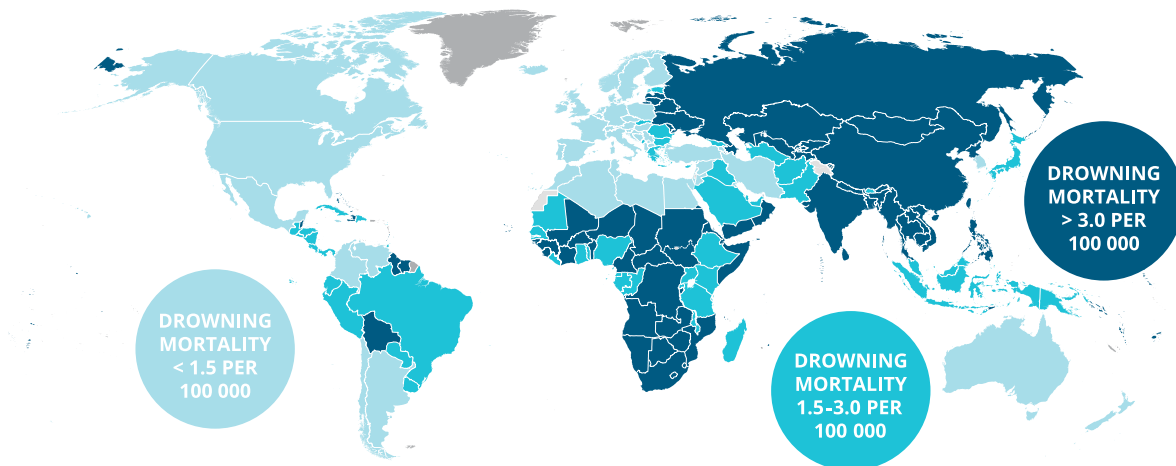
Drowning is one
of the
**10 LEADING
CAUSES OF
DEATH**
for people aged
1-24 years



DROWNING RATES*

*Global Health Estimates 2019: Deaths by Cause, Age, Sex, by Country and by Region, 2019-2000. Geneva, World Health Organization; 2020.

● Data not available ● Not applicable



DROWNING PREVENTION AND THE 2030 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Drowning prevention helps achieve Sustainable Development Goals and targets

1 NO POVERTY

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Drowning
Prevention

Anyone can drown, no one should.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

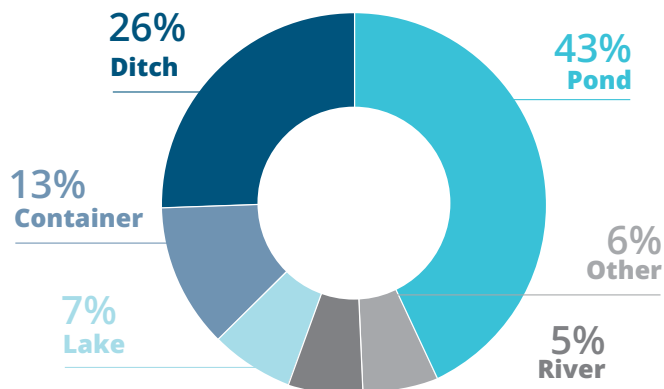
13 CLIMATE ACTION

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

RISK FACTORS

LIVING AROUND WATER

Wherever there is water, there is the threat of drowning



Place of drowning of Bangladeshi children under 5 years

YOUNG CHILDREN

the highest drowning rates are among children aged 1-4 years



FLOOD DISASTERS

extreme rain fall, storm surges, tsunamis or cyclones



TRANSPORT ON WATER

especially on overcrowded or poorly maintained vessels



GLOBAL AGREEMENT FOR ACTION*

*<https://undocs.org/A/RES/75/273>



UN passes **HISTORIC RESOLUTION** for drowning prevention



81
countries sponsor
RESOLUTION



Resolution calls
for
MULTISECTORAL
response



Asks WHO to
coordinate
**DROWNING
PREVENTION**
within UN system



Declares July 25
**WORLD
DROWNING
PREVENTION**
Day



Encourages all countries to **IMPLEMENT
DROWNING PREVENTION PROGRAMMING** in
line with WHO-recommended interventions

Install
barriers
controlling access to water



Provide
safe places
away from water for
pre-school children, with
capable child care



Teach
school-age children basic
**swimming, water
safety and safe
rescue skills**



Train
bystanders in
**safe rescue and
resuscitation**



Set and enforce safe
**boating, shipping
and ferry regulations**



**Improve flood risk
management**
locally and nationally



1.2 Why have an Aquatic Survival programme?

Many of us use water daily for bathing, cleaning, recreational activities and transportation.

In high-resource areas, many of these activities are conducted in the safe environment of the home, or in supervised and regulated areas.

In low-resource areas, many people have no choice but to conduct these essential activities in open water despite understanding the risks involved. Water transportation is generally unregulated, and boats rarely contain adequate safety equipment.

Falling into water is a real risk, and the consequences can be serious – particularly if a person is unable to swim or be rescued.

Swimming is rarely part of formal education, and resources containing information on how to stay safe in and around water are generally unavailable.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) and partner organisations have developed this *Aquatic Survival Programme Implementation Guide*, which is specifically designed for use in low-resource areas. This guide contains simple, but important information for organisations who wish to use the programme. It accompanies the Aquatic Survival manuals.

The guidance provided is not definitive, and organisations should contact the RNLI if they seek additional advice on implementation.

1.3 The role of the Aquatic Survival programme

The role of the Aquatic Survival programme is to prevent drowning by:

- providing water safety messages
- teaching people how to save themselves in the water
- teaching people how to save someone else in the water.

Water safety education

Many drowning deaths can be prevented by learning how to stay safe in and around the water, and how to keep others safe.

Water safety education consists of 10 key water safety messages and skills that can be taught without the need to enter the water.

This can be taught on its own, or as part of a continued learning pathway prior to learning self-survival and rescue.

Self-survival and rescue

Most deaths by drowning occur when people with poor swimming skills accidentally step or fall into water too deep to stand.

Self-survival and rescue gives people taking part the necessary skills to swim to safety or to float in the water and wait for help to arrive.

Entering the water to rescue other people can be very dangerous. Many people drown while trying to rescue other people in difficulty. People taking part in the rescue section will learn how to rescue a person safely without getting into the water.

Self-survival and rescue requires access to a body of water suitable for teaching swimming. To reduce the opportunity for increased risk-taking behaviour, all participants must have a good understanding of the key water safety messages.



Unit 1: Introduction

1.4 The RNLI

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) is a UK-based charity with the aim of reducing loss of life due to drowning. It was founded in 1824, and now has a 24-hour on-call lifeboat service across more than 230 coastal and inland locations in the UK, lifeguard services across more than 240 beaches, trained flood rescue teams and campaigns to educate the public about drowning prevention.

The RNLI saves lives by providing:

- a fleet of all-weather lifeboats, which are available at all times
- inshore craft, which are subject to weather limitations
- a lifeguard service on a seasonal basis
- safety education, swimming programmes and accident prevention
- flood rescue.

Since 2012, the RNLI has also been sharing their lifesaving expertise with institutions, organisations and individuals internationally.

The RNLI's International Department has developed a number of lifesaving interventions, specifically designed for new and developing lifesaving organisations. The Aquatic Survival Programme Implementation is one of these interventions.



RNLI international work

We are committed to reducing global drowning by sharing over 190 years of lifesaving experience. We support lifesaving organisations around the world to empower their own communities – where drowning is a major risk – with the knowledge, skills and solutions to be more resilient.

We work at three levels:

Global

Through advocacy, we want to put drowning on the global development agenda. We want more organisations to include drowning prevention in their work and see more investment in reducing the global drowning burden.

Country programmes

We are working with partner organisations in countries with a high drowning burden, to better understand the problem and work with communities to develop effective solutions.

Sharing our lifesaving expertise

We share our lifesaving expertise with other organisations, to help improve their technical capacity to prevent and respond to drowning incidents. We also learn from others, and incorporate this into our different areas of work.

Key international interventions

- training future leaders from other lifesaving organisations around the world
- survival swimming lessons for children
- classroom-based water safety lessons
- lifeguarding services
- flood and search and rescue training
- designing low-cost rescue equipment
- researching/modelling of drowning risks
- resources and training manuals
- supporting the development of national and regional drowning prevention strategies and plans
- influencing other organisations to address drowning prevention in their policy and practice.



1.5 The Aquatic Survival programme

The Aquatic Survival programme has been designed to be easy to deliver in low-resource settings. It is a flexible programme that can be adapted to the local environment. The target audience for the Aquatic Survival programme is children aged 7–14 years, but parts of the programme may also be suitable for older age groups.

Water safety education allows individuals or organisations to teach key water safety messages to groups of people quickly and easily. They can be taught as a prerequisite to self-survival and rescue, or on their own as part of a classroom-based education programme. The messages are designed to be taught using a flash-card format, and the manual contains all the information needed for a new water safety educator to teach the programme. The flash cards should be printed to a suitable size so that all children in the lesson can clearly see the pictures on the flash cards and hear the voice of the teacher.

The pictures and messages on the flash cards may be modified if the messages are not suitable for the local environment, or if additional messaging is needed. The suitability of messages can be determined by undertaking a risk mapping exercise (see unit 2.2) Digital copies of the images can be requested by email from the RNLI (international@rnli.org.uk).

While the *Aquatic Survival Water Safety Education Manual* should contain all the information needed for new teachers to deliver the messages unassisted, it is recommended that, where possible, new teachers should undertake a training course to deliver the messages. This usually takes 4 hours, and introduces teachers to the flash-card teaching method.



Self-survival and rescue is a specialist section that requires significant safety protocol and procedures to be in place prior to delivery, and for instructors to receive necessary training. Teaching in an aquatic environment is an inherently dangerous activity, and individuals and organisations implementing the programme should ensure that:

- appropriate risk assessments are completed to ensure that control measures are in place to keep the teaching area as safe as possible
- teachers receive necessary training and are continually monitored
- lessons are delivered in line with guidance given in *Aquatic Survival Self-Survival and Rescue Manual*.
- appropriate child protection protocols are in place and understood by all teachers and students
- those undertaking the training (including guardians) are aware of the risks.

Failure to ensure adequate safety procedures are in place may result in the injury or death of a student.

In addition, individuals/organisations should be aware of:

- the availability and cost of equipment (including swimming clothes) needed to deliver the programme, as detailed in the manual
- the safety of the students before and after the training (what happens if the teacher does not turn up?)
- the logistics of ensuring staff receive regular retraining
- any cultural or religious factors that may impact the programme.

Where possible those implementing the programme should liaise with any relevant institutions or individuals who may have experience in teaching in aquatic environments. These may include those with a background in lifesaving and/or swimming teaching.



Learning outcomes

- 2.1 Understand the importance of risk mapping.
- 2.2 Understand who is at risk when targeting a programme.

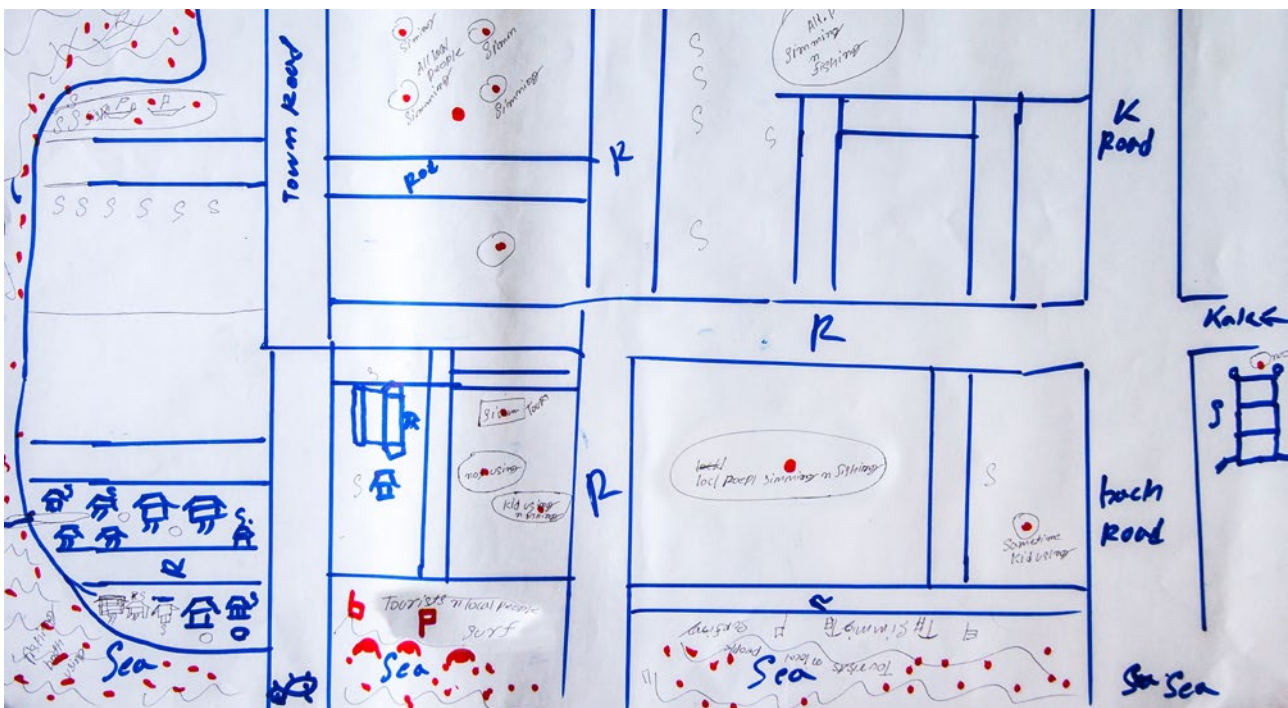
Unit 2: Researching the drowning issue

2.1 Risk mapping

Risk mapping is a process to help your programme target the right people. It is the process of looking at a geographical area to identify high-risk places where people are drowning or getting into difficulty. Community risk mapping helps to decide what intervention you may need to put into place in your community, based on the types of problems you may be experiencing, whether it be drowning in flood waters, inland waterways or at the coast.

Local people will have a good knowledge of local water bodies and their associated hazards, and will be keen to help find a possible solution:

1. Work with the local community to draw a map of the local area. Mark on any key roads, schools, residential areas and all water bodies.
2. Mark on the map the key activities that take place in and around the water bodies.
3. Discuss the hazards associated with these activities and mark on the map where the hazards are.
4. For each hazard discuss who is at risk and mark on the map where these people live.
5. For each hazard discuss a suitable solution to the problem. Think about how the solution will target those at risk and the resources needed to implement it.
6. For each solution mark on the map where the activity will occur (for example, a school).
7. For each solution discuss the resources that would be needed. If possible, mark where the resources are on the map. Resources might include personnel or equipment.
8. Identify a key person responsible for doing further research on each solution.
9. Agree a time to redraw the risk map, and see if the risks have changed once solutions have been put in place.



2.2 Identifying who is at risk

The Aquatic Survival programme is designed to be targeted at children who are at risk of stepping or falling into deep water. To ensure that resources are targeted appropriately it is therefore important to understand who is at risk, why they are at risk and where they are at risk.

Data on fatal and non-fatal drowning incidents may be gathered from local data sources such as:

- the police
- hospital data
- rescue organisations and/or coordination centres
- other non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- local fishing authorities
- village leaders.

However, in reality it is often very difficult to access such data and the quality of the data may be poor. For most organisations an understanding of the local drowning risk will come by talking to local people who live and/or work around water. Talking to a good cross-section of the community will provide the best information, and will also highlight key stakeholder groups who are supportive or may oppose the programme. Stakeholders can then be used to help develop a risk map of the local area (see previous page).

Who is at risk?

The same hazard may pose different risks for different groups of people. To be able to control risk requires us to know who is at risk. The more we can understand about the people involved in the risk, the better we can develop targeted interventions.

Age

The way we interact with water changes as we get older. When we are young a lot of our interaction is for play and bathing, but as we get older we start to use water for other things like fishing or washing animals. Therefore the risks associated with drowning change with age.

Gender

The activities that we undertake are shaped by the society we live in. In many societies these activities are still largely defined by gender. Women are generally more likely to use water to undertake household chores, while men are more likely to use water for income generation. This disparity between male- and female-dominated activities generally increases with age as we gain more responsibilities and our roles in society become more defined. Our behaviour around water is also influenced by gender. Generally, men tend to show greater levels of risk-taking behaviour than women.



Unit 3: Risk assessment



Learning outcomes

- 3.1 Understand what a risk assessment is.
- 3.2 Understand why a risk assessment is necessary for implementing the Aquatic Survival programme.
- 3.3 Understand how to identify hazards, risks and suitable control measures.
- 3.4 Understand how to begin implementing suitable control measures from a risk assessment.

3.1 What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment is a systematic process of evaluating the hazards and risks involved in an activity or area, and identifying suitable ways to try and make the activity or area safe.

A hazard is something that has the potential to cause harm.

Risk is the probability that somebody is likely to be harmed by a hazard. This is often described as the severity of the hazard multiplied by the possibility that it will cause somebody harm: severity x possibility.

A control measure involves the steps that you might take to guard people against the hazard and lower the levels of risk.

A risk assessment should not be a complex or difficult process, but rather a sensible approach to managing safety for you, your teachers and members of the public being taught.

3.2 Aquatic Survival programme risk assessment

Implementing the *Aquatic Survival Self-Survival and Rescue Manual* can involve risks that must be understood by the implementing organisation before starting.

Although the *Aquatic Survival Self-Survival and Rescue Manual* provides a protocol for safe management of aquatic survival lessons, if a teacher does not adhere to the protocol then there is a risk that a child may be seriously injured or may drown.

In addition, when teaching in open water, environmental conditions may change quickly, putting the teacher into an environment that they have not been trained to teach in. Organisations must empower teachers to be able to stop the lessons when they are working in conditions that may pose a danger to themselves or the students.

To adequately identify all the risks involved in implementing the project, a risk assessment of the project should be conducted by the implementing organisation prior to delivery. This should then be reassessed at regular intervals throughout the project.



3.3 Hazard, risk and control measures

Conducting a risk assessment of the implementation of the Aquatic Survival programme requires organisations to consider all the hazards within the programme, and the risk the hazards pose.

When conducting your risk assessment, always try and meet a stakeholder, who is familiar with the area and the way in which it is used by the public, at the potential teaching site, and take an experienced teacher or somebody with a good level of operational knowledge.

A hazard is something that has the potential to cause harm. When implementing the Aquatic Survival programme organisations will come across many different types of hazards.

These hazards can generally be organised into three different categories:

- **Hazards that may affect individuals**
For example: an improperly trained swimming teacher looking after children.
- **Hazards that may affect the implementation of a programme**
For example: a road used to access a training area that is closed during a rainy season.
- **Hazards that may affect the implementing organisation**
For example: incorrect organisational registration documents.

Examples of hazards, risks and control measures

	Description	Aquatic survival teaching example
Hazard	Something that can cause harm.	Rocks in the corner of the swimming teaching area.
Risk	This is a combination of the severity of the harm, and the possibility that it will happen.	<p>Possibility: It is possible that a child could hit the rocks during teaching, especially if the teacher is unaware of the rocks.</p> <p>Severity: A child could sustain a serious injury.</p>
Control measure	Something that is put in place to reduce the level of risk.	<p>Put a sign in the area to warn people of the rocks.</p> <p>Move the teaching area to a new part of the beach/area.</p> <p>Retrain teachers to be able to identify safe teaching areas.</p>

Risk matrix

Possibility	3 - High Likely to happen	3 - Medium	6 - High	9 - High
	2 - Medium Could happen occasionally	2 - Low	4 - Medium	6 - High
	1 - Low Unlikely to happen	1 - Low	2 - Low	3 - Medium
		1 - Minor Little or no damage to property or people. Any injuries likely to be minor.	2 - Major Some damage to property or people could happen. Injuries could be major.	3 - Fatal Damage to property or people likely. Death or multiple deaths could occur.
		Severity		

Risk is the probability that somebody will be harmed by a hazard. This may include physical or emotional harm at an individual level, or reputation harm at an organisational level.

In a risk assessment we measure risk by ranking the severity of the hazard (the amount of harm it could potentially cause) and multiplying this by the possibility that it will cause somebody harm:

severity x possibility = risk.

Generally severity and possibility are ranked on a scale of 1 to 3:

Severity: 1 – Minor, 2 – Major, 3 – Fatal

Possibility: 1 – Very unlikely, 2 – Unlikely, 3 – Likely

Once a risk has been identified, an organisation must consider ways to reduce the risk. These are called 'control measures'.

Example:

Hazard: Rocks in the corner of the swimming teaching area.

Severity = 3 (A child could seriously injure themselves).

Possibility that it will cause harm = 2 (unlikely if teachers are aware).

Therefore: **3 (severity) x 2 (possibility) = 6 (risk).**

Control measures = Put a sign in the area to warn people of the rocks. Move swimming teaching area to a new part of the beach/area. Retrain teachers to be able to identify safe teaching areas.

A risk assessment should not be a complex or difficult process, but rather a sensible approach to managing safety for aquatic survival teachers, their students, nearby members of the public and the implementing organisation.

All the findings and recommendations from your risk assessments should be recorded on a risk assessment template (see the supporting forms and documentation at the end of this book). This document should be reviewed at regular intervals, usually each year and/or after a significant incident, for example following a major change in the topography of the beach or a drowning incident.

Having an organised filing system for your risk assessments will greatly aid this review process. This can be organised online, on your computer (providing you have a back-up) or in a paper format if you do not have access to digital resources.

It is worth remembering that you can only do what is reasonable to control risks. This means balancing the level of risk against the time, trouble and/or money it would take in order to implement control measures. You can only work on the information that is available to you at the time of completing your risk assessment and you cannot be expected to account for unforeseeable risks.

3.4 Implementing control measures

Risk assessments are only useful if you implement the control measures that you have identified. Developing a plan or timetable and assigning tasks to specific people will help.

You should prioritise your risks, firstly using the matrix system included in the supporting forms and documentation at the end of this book. Risks that come out as 'high' should be considered first.

It may be that not all of the responsibility for implementing the control measures sits with you or your organisation. It may be necessary to consult with your local government or local communities to establish who holds responsibility for safety on the beach/area and work with them to implement your control measures.





Learning outcomes

- 4.1 Understand what a stakeholder is
- 4.2 Understand the difference between internal and external stakeholders
- 4.3 Understand how to identify stakeholders.
- 4.4 Understand who might run an Aquatic Survival programme.
- 4.5 Understand how to complete a stakeholder matrix.

Unit 4: Stakeholder engagement

4.1 What is a stakeholder?

A stakeholder is someone who has an interest in a business, organisation or project. A key factor in the smooth implementation of the Aquatic Survival programme is to consider the needs of your stakeholders and make sure they are appropriately consulted.

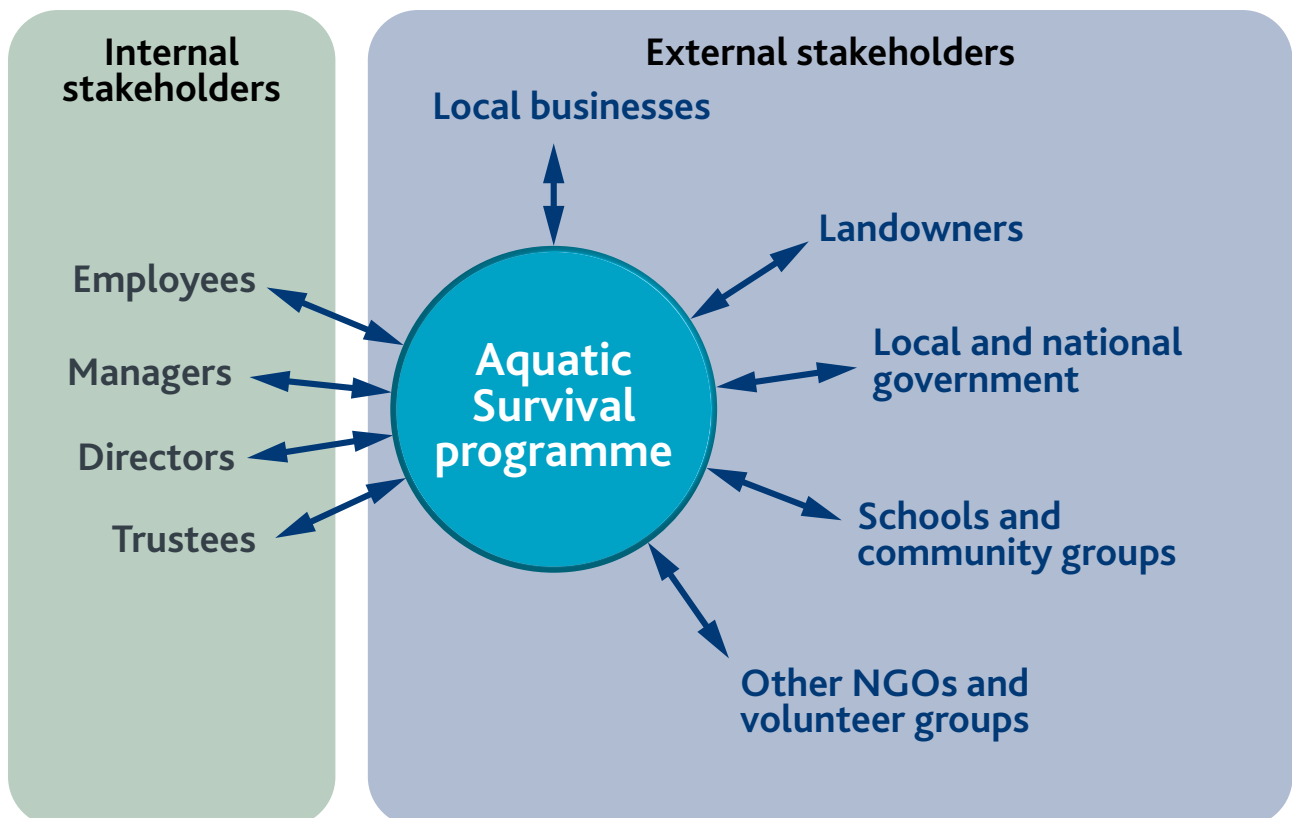
4.2 Internal and external stakeholders

Internal stakeholders are groups within your organisation, for example, employees, directors, trustees or donors.

External stakeholders are groups or individuals that are outside of your organisation but have an impact on your activities. They might be other water users, landowners, schools and community groups or local businesses.

Stakeholders can be engaged through both formal and informal processes. A formal relationship might involve regular, documented meetings to record the progress of your working relationships. Informal processes might be better suited to external community stakeholders who prefer a more relaxed approach.

Different examples of stakeholders and how to work with them are discussed in this section.



4.3 Identifying stakeholders

Identifying the right stakeholders is key to successful implementation of the Aquatic Survival programme. Prior to starting the programme organisations should spend time considering which stakeholders are important to the running of the programme. Stakeholders should be reviewed throughout the project to ensure that new stakeholders are involved in the project, and that resources are not spent engaging unnecessary stakeholders.

When identifying project stakeholders organisations should consider the following groups:

- the people with power to make necessary changes or influence over decision-makers – these may include high level officials, or respected members of the local community
- the people who should benefit from your project – these may include community groups, parents or teachers
- the people who share your aims and can help to influence targets – these may include other NGOs, local government officials or funders
- the people opposed to what you want to achieve who will block suggested changes.

When deciding on how much effort should be put into engaging with identified stakeholders, organisations should consider how much influence the stakeholder will have on the project, and the amount of resource required to get the stakeholder interested in the programme.

For some stakeholders who are very influential to the running of the project an organisation may have to commit significant resource to get them interested in the project. Suitable stakeholder analysis prior to implementation should ensure that sufficient resource is set aside in the planning stages.



Unit 4: Stakeholder engagement

4.4 Aquatic Survival stakeholders

The stakeholders needed to run the Aquatic Survival programme will vary depending on the local context and delivery method.

In many cases the implementation of the Aquatic Survival programme will be through the school education system. This is likely to involve organisations working closely with:

- local community members
- schools (government and private)
- local authorities
- government ministries
- other NGOs.

Communicating regularly with stakeholders is key to maintaining good relationships and ensuring smooth running of the programme. Regular updates should be given to all stakeholders. When working with stakeholders it is important to consider the best method for communication from the outset.

For some stakeholders this may be best achieved through face-to-face meetings, newsletters or formal reports. For other stakeholders – such as large groups or those with low levels of literacy – creative communication methods may be more effective, such as drama or song.



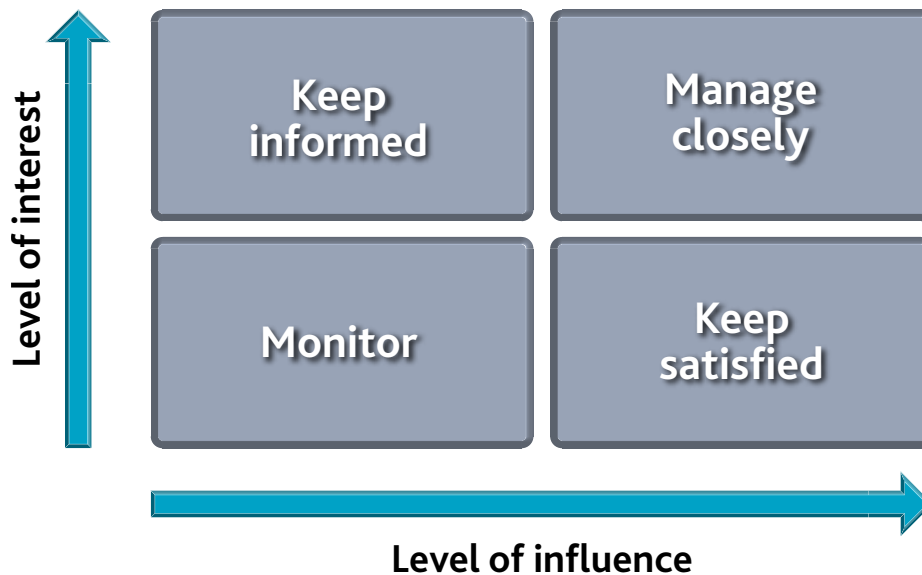
Case study: Zanzibar aquatic survival

In Zanzibar, water safety education is given in schools. Training on how to deliver the messages is given to schoolteachers by a local NGO. Access to the schools is provided by the Ministry of Education, who coordinate the teachers and ensure they turn up to the training. The Ministry of Education also follows up with the teachers after the training to monitor the delivery of the programme.

In Zanzibar, self-survival and rescue is taught by swimming teachers from the local NGO. Children are recruited (with permission from the Ministry of Education and local authorities) from government schools and Madrasas. Local communities are engaged in the programme through village elders and community groups. Drama groups are often used to communicate information in areas of low literacy.



4.5 Stakeholder matrix



The stakeholder matrix shown above will help you prioritise which stakeholders need the most engagement.

Try this activity: Draw out the matrix above on a sheet of paper, and then write down each of your stakeholders on smaller, separate pieces of paper. Decide how much influence your different stakeholders have on your service (how much they affect you), and how much interest they have in your service (how much you affect them). Now, based on this, place each stakeholder in the appropriate box.

Once you have mapped the interests of the stakeholders you can then prioritise how much engagement you need to have with them.

If your stakeholder has a high level of interest and a high level of influence, it is important to maintain a good relationship with them and manage them closely. This usually means regular meetings, phone calls, reports and emails to keep them well informed. The type of stakeholder that might fall into this category could be a landowner.

If your stakeholder has a high level of influence but only limited interest, then maintain a good relationship with them to keep them satisfied, but they may not need regular information from you.

If the stakeholder has a high level of interest but only limited influence, then keep them informed, which could be with written reports or emails.

Stakeholders who have both limited influence and interest require less communication but monitor their activity and contact them when you need to.

People are the most important part of your service. Recruiting, training and looking after your teachers, coordinators and managers is crucial.

Unit 5: People



Learning outcomes

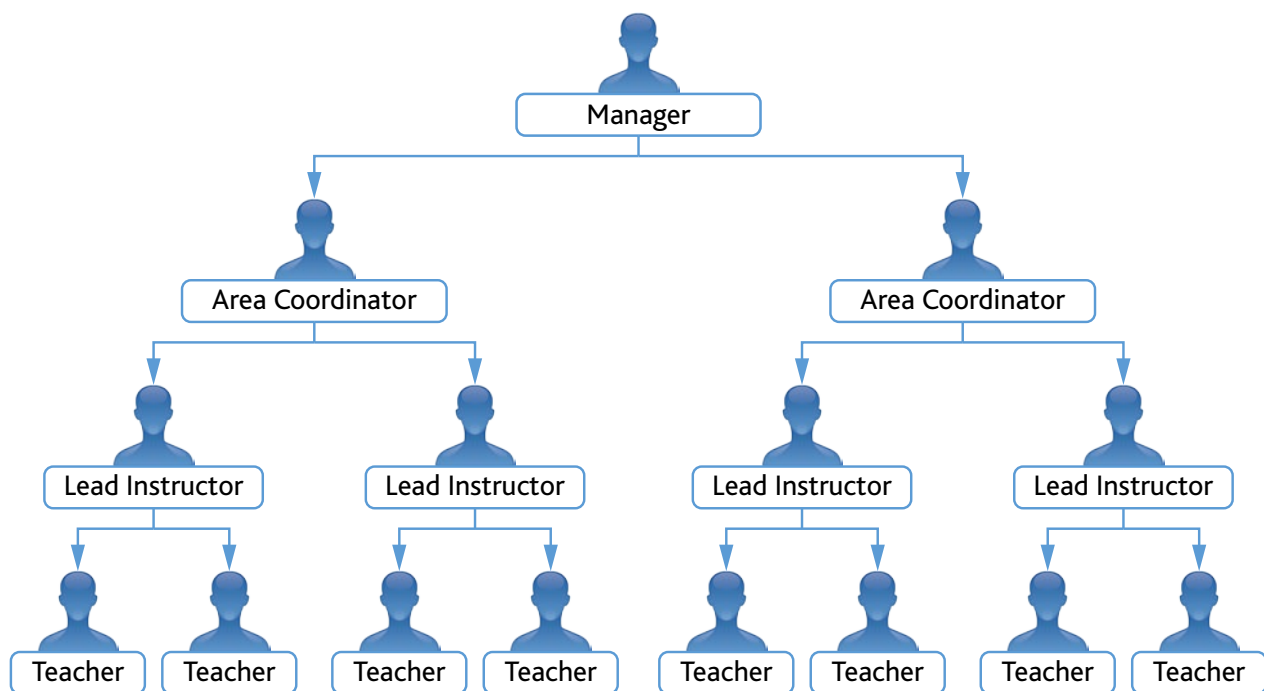
- 5.1 Understand the structure of the team needed to implement the Aquatic Survival programme.
- 5.2 Understand the different roles and responsibilities that make up an Aquatic Survival programme.
- 5.3 Understand how to find good community awareness teachers.
- 5.4 Understand the role of training, and what training responsibilities an aquatic survival programme holds.
- 5.5 Understand how first aid relates to the Aquatic Survival programme.

5.1 Aquatic Survival programme team structure

The number of people and skills required within the project implementation team will vary depending on the method of implementation and the scale of the project. In many cases the people implementing the project will be volunteers, and it is important to ensure that the ambitions of the project are realistic given people's availability.

In all cases it is important to have a strong management team capable of having oversight of all aspects of the programme. This is particularly important for self-survival and rescue, where it is essential that the organisation has the capacity to monitor the swimming teachers to ensure that they are adhering to safety protocol.

The implementing team must also be capable of providing the necessary initial training and refresher training to the teachers. The RNLI *International L&D Governance Document* for Aquatic Survival implementation states the requirements necessary for training and assessing teachers.



A typical Aquatic Survival programme staffing structure

5.2 Roles and responsibilities

Generally, a project team implementing the Aquatic Survival programme will contain the following personnel:

Manager

- engages with key stakeholders (meetings and communications)
- ensures equipment is procured and available
- recruits and manages staff.

Area coordinator

- ensures that project activities are running to schedule
- ensures that teachers attend refresher training courses
- liaises with school headteachers/community
- provides logistical support.

Lead instructor

- provides initial training
- ensures regular refresher training
- monitors the quality of the teaching.

Recruiter

(may be done by the area coordinator in small teams)

- works with the community or schools to recruit children onto the programme
- ensures that children are safely escorted to/from the training venue
- collects necessary consent forms
- records the details of children attending the programme.

Teachers

- teaches the lessons according to the Aquatic Survival manuals
- ensures the safety of the children throughout the lesson.

5.3 Finding good teachers

Identifying suitable community awareness teachers is key to a successful programme.

Good teachers lead to better learning outcomes – students are able to learn faster and retain the knowledge for longer periods of time.

Teachers should be enthusiastic about saving lives and keen to share their knowledge about water safety.

There is no recommended minimum age requirement for being a community awareness teacher. However, all teachers should have the following qualities:

- **trustworthy** – be trusted to plan lessons appropriately
- **reliable** – arrive at lessons on time
- **motivated** – deliver lessons to the best of their ability
- **understand local water hazards** – be able to adapt the programme to the local environment.

All new teachers should be given appropriate training and mentoring so that they understand each of the water safety messages.



5.4 Training

Regular training is important for all Aquatic Survival teachers. Training allows a teacher to:

- get feedback from their colleagues
- practise techniques that they may not use often (such as rescue and first aid)
- keep up to date with any changes in the programme content.

Implementing organisations should try to ensure that teachers attend training sessions at least once every 6 months. To ensure that their qualification remains valid, teachers must be formally assessed at set intervals.

Details on formal training requirements can be found in the *International L&D Governance Document* for aquatic survival implementation. If a copy of this is required, please contact international@rnli.org.uk.

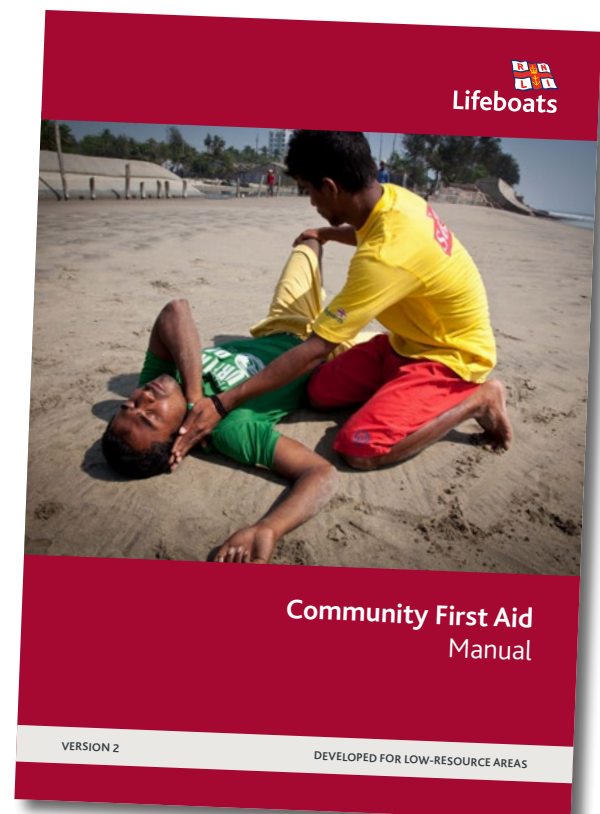


5.5 First aid

First aid is basic medical care that can be administered by trained people with limited equipment. The aims of first aid are to preserve life, prevent worsening of the condition and promote recovery of the casualty.

Teachers should be trained in first aid techniques and be provided with first aid equipment to use in order to deal with these situations when they arise.

The RNLI's *Community First Aid Manual* offers further information and a baseline standard to train to.



Unit 6: Equipment



Learning outcomes

6.1 Know the equipment needed to run the Aquatic Survival programme.

6.1 Aquatic Survival programme equipment

The Aquatic Survival programme has been designed so that it can be taught using equipment commonly available in most low-resource settings.

Water safety education

The only equipment necessary are the flash cards found in the *Aquatic Survival Water Safety Education Manual*, printed to a suitable size so that students within the class can easily see the pictures on the front. A2 or A3 size is usually suitable for most class sizes, and laminating the cards keeps them waterproof.



Self-survival and rescue

Using suitable teaching equipment will greatly assist teaching water survival skills to beginners.

A floating object

A floating object is an important piece of equipment that can be used to provide support to a student while they are gaining confidence in the water.

In some countries, specialist floating objects have been developed that are specifically designed for teaching swimming. However, in areas where specialist equipment is not available or too expensive, alternative locally sourced equipment may be used.



A floating object must be:

- easy to hold on to
- easy to move through the water
- capable of keeping the student afloat in the water.

All students will require a floating object throughout the self-survival and rescue course.

Examples of suitable floating objects include:

Swimming float

A swimming float is specifically designed for teaching swimming. They are usually made of foam and can be found in many sports shops. They may be rectangular in shape, or long, round and thin.



Advantages

Easy to hold.

Disadvantages

Relatively expensive and not available in many areas.

Unit 6: Equipment

Water container

An empty water container (at least 5 litres) can easily hold the weight of a child or adult. Most containers have a handle that a student can hold onto in the water. The container should be cleaned well before use.



Advantages

Cheap and available in most areas.

Disadvantages

Not as easy to hold onto as a swimming float.

Clothing for teachers and students

Teachers and students should have clothing that protects them from the sun, conforms to cultural and religious requirements and is tight enough that it doesn't restrict movement through the water.

Equipment to set up the teaching area

Rope and floating objects are required to set up the swimming teaching area (see page 36).

Storing equipment

Prior to implementation, organisations should carefully consider where they will store their equipment so that it is safe yet easily accessible. The storage area should be well ventilated so that equipment can dry and to prevent mould from forming.





Learning outcomes

- 7.1 Understand where and how the Aquatic Survival programme can be delivered.
- 7.2 Understand how to identify a safe teaching area.
- 7.3 Understand how to set up a safe teaching area.
- 7.4 Understand how to check a teaching area for dangers.

7.1 Programme delivery

The Aquatic Survival programme has been designed to be flexible so that it can be delivered across a range of environments.

Water safety education



Water safety education has been designed to be delivered in a classroom environment where children are able to see the pictures on the front of the flash cards and hear the voice of the teacher. Generally this works best in a class of less than 40 children. As the children will be sitting for a period of approximately 1 hour, the classroom should be suitable and comfortable.



Self-survival and rescue



The type of water body used to teach self-survival and rescue will vary depending on the season and the geography of the local environment. Some organisations may have access to a purpose-built swimming pool, but many will have to use a river, lake, pond or the ocean. Any water body may be used as long as it meets the necessary safety criteria (see 7.2 – Identifying a safe teaching area).

If the water is on private property it is important that permission is gained from the site owner prior to the training taking place.

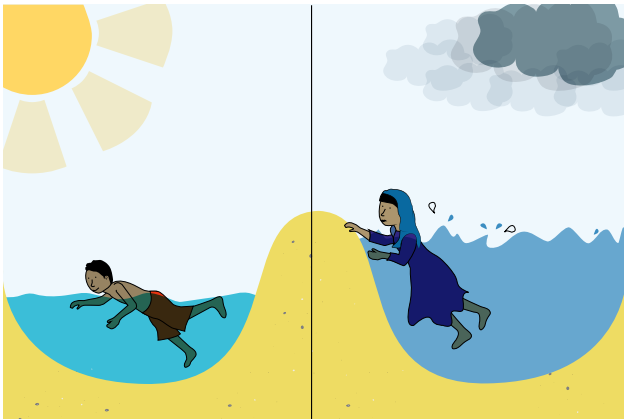
Ways of implementing the programme

The implementing organisation may use members of their own organisation to conduct the training (direct implementation) or train members of another organisation or government institution (indirect implementation). In either case, the organisation providing the training is responsible for ensuring that teachers are trained to the required standard, that they receive regular refresher training, and that the quality of their training is regularly monitored. A system for monitoring teachers should be developed prior to implementation (see page 39). This should be reviewed regularly to monitor performance and ensure that the programme is being delivered safely.

7.2 Identifying a safe teaching area

The safety and suitability of the area will be influenced by a number of factors:

Weather and tide



Why: Natural water bodies can change dramatically depending on the weather and, in some cases, the tide. An area may be safe when it is sunny but dangerous after rain.

How to protect: Ask a local person how the conditions of the water body change with the weather and the tide.

Water depth



Why: Students may step or fall into deep water beyond their capability.

How to protect: The depth of water suitable for teaching swimming will vary depending on the standard of the students. Beginners should be taught in chest-deep water but, as their ability and confidence increase, the water depth can be increased.

Water speed



Why: If the water speed is too fast then students will struggle to undertake the activities, and the teacher will be unable to watch the class effectively.

How to protect: Try to find an area where the water speed is as slow as possible, ideally less than half the walking speed of the people you are teaching. Check by throwing a floating object into the water.

Strainers



Why: A strainer is an object that allows water to pass through it. Strainers are extremely dangerous because they can hold people against them. The example of a strainer illustrated shows the branches of a fallen tree.

How to protect: Swimming lessons and activities should never be taught upstream of a strainer.

7.3 Setting up a safe teaching area

After selecting a safe area to teach swimming it is important that the area is clearly marked out.

A clearly marked teaching area:

- reduces the chances of students walking or swimming into dangerous water
- allows you to keep students together, making it easier to watch students when they are practising swimming
- allows the teacher and students to see progress because they can see how far they have to swim.

The teaching area should be large enough to run lessons safely. Students should have enough room to practise their skills, and the teacher should be able to reach the students quickly if they get into difficulty.

To mark out the teaching area you will need:



Brightly coloured rope that floats



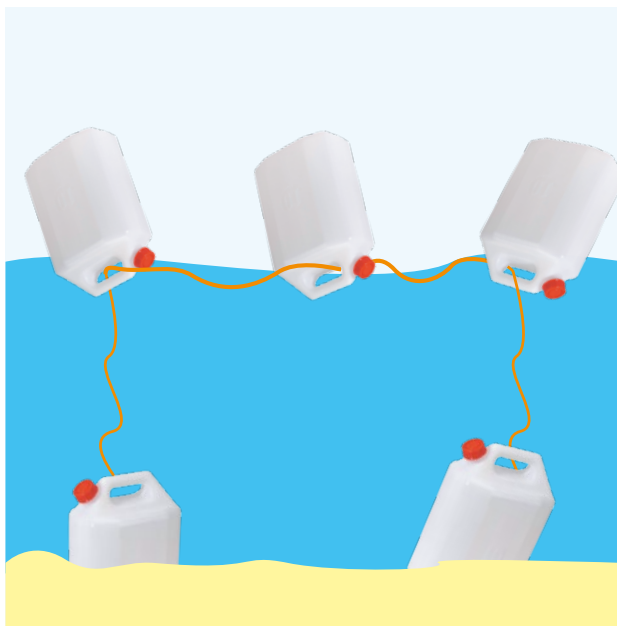
Sinking objects (such as water containers full of sand)



Floating objects (such as empty water containers)

To mark out the teaching area:

- Place a sinking object in each corner.
- Place a floating object on the surface in each corner and anchor it to the sinking object using rope.
- Connect the floating objects using rope.
- Attach more floating objects to the rope to keep it afloat.

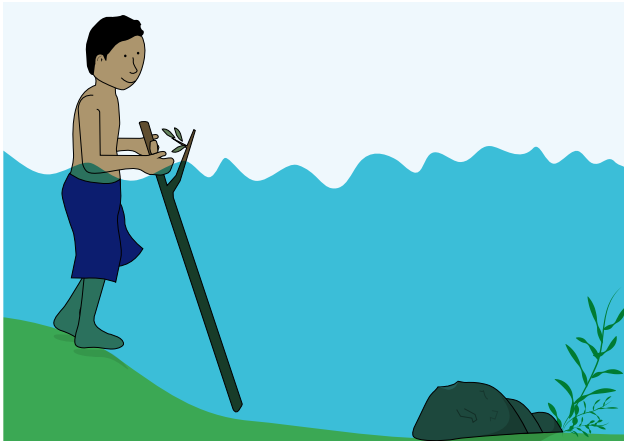


If in a tidal area, check the depth of the water every 10 minutes and adjust the area if necessary.

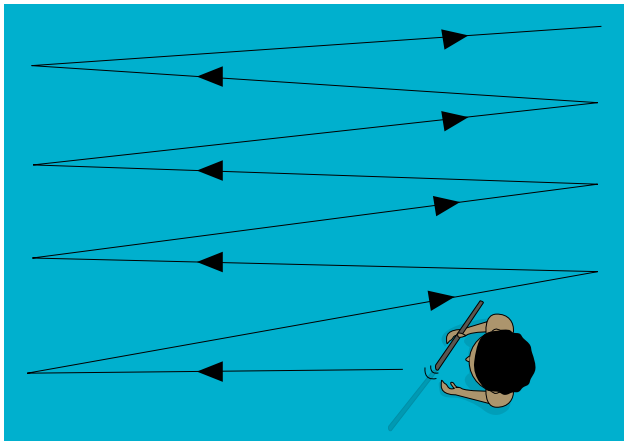
7.4 Checking a teaching area for dangers

The easiest way to check for submerged dangers is to walk slowly and carefully around the teaching area, feeling for underwater dangers in front of you using a stick.

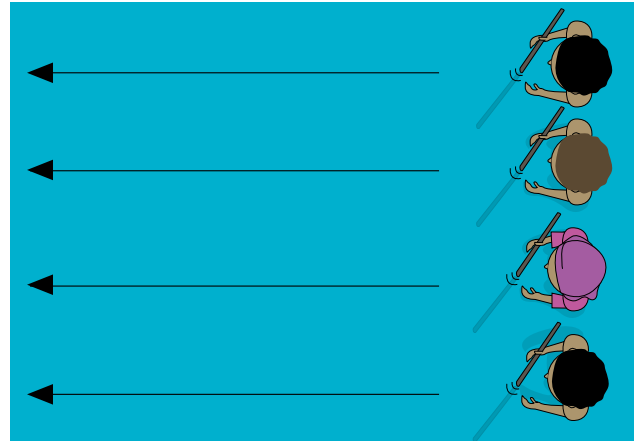
Never check the area alone in case you get into difficulty.



Starting in a corner, zigzag slowly through the teaching area while using a stick to check under the water. Continue this process ensuring that you cover all the teaching area.



If more people are available, line up shoulder to shoulder in a straight line along the edge of the teaching area. Move forward together, checking for submerged objects until you reach the other side.



Unit 8: Programme safety



Learning outcomes

- 8.1 Understand why we have safety procedures.
- 8.2 Understand how to deliver a safe Aquatic Survival programme.
- 8.3 Understand safeguarding and its implications on vulnerable people.

8.1 Why have safety procedures?

Safety procedures are designed to minimise risk. Working in an aquatic environment is an inherently dangerous activity, and the Aquatic Survival programme **manual** includes a number of safety procedures that must be followed prior to and during implementation.



8.2 Delivering a safe Aquatic Survival programme

It is the responsibility of the implementing organisation to ensure that all aspects of the Aquatic Survival programme are delivered according to the guidance contained within the *Aquatic Survival Manual* and the *International L&D Governance Document* for aquatic survival implementation. This is irrespective of whether the programme is delivered by the trainers of the implementing organisation or another organisation (for example schoolteachers).

This includes ensuring teachers are trained correctly and are competent teachers, and ensuring safety protocols are adhered to.

Monitoring of the safety of the programme may be done by:

- reassessing the teachers on a regular basis according to the aquatic survival assessment checklist (this may be combined with refresher training)
- making it compulsory to register any scheduled swimming course with the implementing organisation for approval (so that spot checks can be conducted)
- the lead instructor conducting spot checks on swimming sites and reporting to management on how the programme is being delivered (use Swimming area – suitability checklist – see Supporting forms and documentation section)
- the lead instructor conducting spot check reassessments of children at the end of a course.

Monitoring information should be sent to the programme manager to review. If an activity is not being conducted according to protocol and the safety of the students or teachers is compromised then the activity should be stopped immediately. An investigation should be conducted by management and necessary action taken to ensure safety before the activity restarts. If it is considered that the protocols provided in the *Aquatic Survival Manual* are unsuitable then the implementing organisation should let the RNLI International Team know as soon as possible, along with any suggested changes.

8.3 Safeguarding

Safeguarding is about protecting and supporting young people and vulnerable adults so that they can live free from harm, abuse and neglect.



Those implementing the Aquatic Survival programme will be working closely with young people, and potentially working in areas where they may meet vulnerable adults.

Aquatic survival teachers should be aware that it is their responsibility to tell someone if they see or hear evidence that a young person or vulnerable adult has been harmed or abused.

Young people are defined as being under the age of 18 years.

Vulnerable adults are defined as being 18 years old or over and in need of community care services by reasons of mental health or other disability, age or illness.

Implementing organisations should have procedures in place that:

- **limit the opportunity for a vulnerable adult or young person to be harmed, abused or neglected**

This should include collecting written character references for all members of the implementing organisation who are working with vulnerable adults or young people. Character references should be obtained from key members of the community (for example, village leaders) or – where feasible – the police.

- **ensure all staff are regularly trained on safeguarding, including how to identify someone who has been harmed, abused or neglected**

Where possible training should be conducted by someone with professional training in safeguarding issues. Local and international children's charities often offer this service and should be consulted before implementation.

- **offer a way for staff to report a vulnerable adult or young person who has been identified as having been harmed, abused or neglected**

This should include having key focal people within the organisation who have the contact details of relevant protection agencies (for example, police and social workers) so that they can be contacted if someone is seen to have been harmed, abused or neglected.

The RNLI has a safeguarding leaflet that contains more information about the issue and summarises how to identify a person who may be in need of assistance. The RNLI also has a template *Safeguarding Policy* that may be adopted by organisations if they do not have an existing policy. Both these documents may be requested by email from international@rnli.org.uk



Learning outcomes

- 9.1 Understand why we have programme administration.
- 9.2 Understand how lessons learned help develop the programme.

9.1 What is programme administration?

The delivery of an Aquatic Survival programme will require a certain amount of administration to ensure that appropriate records are maintained. This is so that:

- parents/guardians can be contacted in the event of an emergency
- the performance and progress of the programme can be measured
- achievements can be communicated with others.

Key information can be recorded in a class register.

For self-survival and rescue, as a minimum it is recommended that the following are recorded:

- the name and emergency contact details of the student
- the student's attendance record throughout the programme
- Whether the student has achieved the programme outputs.

9.2 Lessons learned

An organisation should always look to improve its performance and its safety record. A good way of doing this is to put a system in place to review all incidents and accidents that occur and use the lessons learned.

A lesson learned is knowledge or understanding gained by experience. This could be a good experience, such as something that went well and was a success, or a bad experience such as an accident resulting in injury or equipment damage.

Recording information from incidents, accidents and training exercises will help you to gain an understanding of which processes are working well, and which should be reviewed and changed. If you start to notice a pattern or trend in the data (for example, one kind of incident occurring often) then your previous logs can be looked at so that you can understand why. This should allow you to make informed decisions on changes you may need to make to your operating procedures.



Supporting forms and documentation

1	Risk assessment template	44
	Risk assessment example	45
2	Monitoring checklist	46
3	Swimming area – suitability checklist	47
4	Organisation and safety checklist	48
5	International safeguarding tips (2015)	49

The blank forms on the following pages can be supplied as electronic files.

Aquatic Survival Programme Implementation Risk Assessment



Key terms explained	
Hazard	Something that can cause harm
Risk	Possibility of the hazard causing injury multiplied by the severity of the injury
Control measure	A safety system that is put in place to reduce the risk of injury
Risk assessment details	
Location	
Type of risk assessment	
Name of risk assessor(s)	
Date of risk assessment	Suggested review date

Possibility			
3 High possibility	3 Medium Risk	6 High Risk	9 Very High Risk
2 Medium possibility	2 Low Risk	4 Medium Risk	6 High Risk
1 Low possibility	1 Very Low Risk	2 Low Risk	3 Medium Risk
	1 Minor	2 Major	3 Fatal

Severity

Hazard	Who is at risk	Initial risk (before control measures)		Control measures already in place	Additional Control Measures	Remaining risk (after control measures)	
		Possibility	Risk			Possibility	Risk
		Severity				Severity	
		Possibility	Risk			Possibility	Risk
		Severity				Severity	
		Possibility	Risk			Possibility	Risk
		Severity				Severity	
		Possibility	Risk			Possibility	Risk
		Severity				Severity	

Aquatic Survival Programme Implementation Risk Assessment



Key terms explained	
Hazard	Something that can cause harm
Risk	Possibility of the hazard causing injury multiplied by the severity of the injury
Control measure	A safety system that is put in place to reduce the risk of injury
Risk assessment details	
Location	Nungwi Beach, Zanzibar (Identified training venue)
Type of risk assessment	Reach rescue
Name of risk assessor(s)	John Smith
Date of risk assessment	15/01/16
	Suggested review date 15/01/17

3 High possibility	3 Medium Risk	6 High Risk	9 Very High Risk
2 Medium possibility	2 Low Risk	4 Medium Risk	6 High Risk
1 Low possibility	1 Very Low Risk	2 Low Risk	3 Medium Risk
	1 Minor	2 Major	3 Fatal

Possibility

Severity

Hazard	Who is at risk	Initial risk (before control measures)		Control measures already in place	Additional Control Measures	Remaining risk (after control measures)	
		Possibility	Risk			Possibility	Risk
Drowning	Students and teachers	3	9	Teachers and students wear swimwear that is not heavy or loose. Maintain situational awareness of any new hazards forming and report them to team.	Create and follow SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) for flood rescue	2	4
		3				2	
Slippery and/or uneven surfaces	Students and teachers	3	6	Awareness of any hazards and report hazards to all team members. Instruction on carrying equipment.		2	2
		2				1	
Accidental falling into water	Students and teachers	3	9	Teachers and students wear swimwear that is not heavy or loose. Awareness of any new hazards forming and report them to training. Ensure Aquatic Survival teachers are competent and in date with training.	Make sure that the teacher can swim at least 50 meters.	2	4
		3				2	
			Risk				Risk

Monitoring checklist

Monitor name:			
School name:		Headteacher:	
Visit date:		Headteacher contact:	
Swimming teachers:			
Swimming area – suitability checklist	Yes	No	Don't know
Are the weather conditions suitable for teaching?			
Is the teaching area free from dangerous animals?			
Is the water free from visible pollution?			
Is the water quality considered safe to swim in?			
Is the water flow less than half walking speed?			
Is the area downstream clear of strainers?			
Is the area free from sudden changes in water depth?			
Is there a shallow slope?			
Has the teaching area been checked for dangerous underwater objects?			
Organisation checklist	Yes	No	Don't know
Are the students grouped into similar ability?			
Is there an appropriate first aid kit available?			
Is there correct teaching equipment available?			
Is the class size suitable for the ability of the teacher? (6:1 experienced, 4:1 inexperienced)			
Can the teachers see and hear all of the students?			
Can all the students see and hear the teacher?			
Can the teacher comfortably interact with all of the students?			
Can the teacher get to all of the students within 5 seconds?			
Is the teaching area large enough for the number of students?			
Are the students wearing safe swimwear?			
Do the teachers check the students for medical conditions that might affect their swimming ability?			
Are registration forms and documents being completed properly?			
Has the teaching area been set up correctly?			
Teaching ability	Yes	No	Not sure
Are the teachers following the lesson plans?			
Are the teachers confident in teaching the course content?			
Are the teachers in control of the students?			
Are the teachers motivating the students appropriately?			
Are the teachers fit and able to teach the lesson?			
Are the children achieving the outcomes of the lesson?			
Students' feedback			
What did the students enjoy about the lesson?			
What did the students not enjoy about the lesson?			
Comments:			
Acceptable	Improvement required	Urgent safety issue	(circle as applicable)

Swimming area – suitability checklist

Use the checklist below to identify an area that is suitable for teaching swimming.

If you answer **no** to any of the questions, the area is **not** suitable for teaching and another area should be found.

In addition to the checklist, thorough consultation should be undertaken with local people to ensure the area contains no additional hazards.

Consideration	Yes	No	Unknown
Do people regularly enter the water?			Ask local people for advice.
Is the water flow less than half walking speed?			Check by throwing a stick into the water.
Is the area downstream clear of strainers?			Walk downstream of the area looking for debris.
Is the area free from sudden changes in water depth?			Check by walking through the teaching area.
Is there a shallow slope?			Check by walking through the teaching area.
Is the teaching area free from dangerous underwater objects?			Check by walking through the teaching area.
Is the teaching area free from dangerous animals?			Ask local people for advice.
Is the water free from waterborne disease?			Ask local people or public health authorities for advice.
Is the water free from pollution?			Ask local people or public health authorities for advice.

Organisation and safety checklist

To check the safety of students during the lesson, regularly assess the checklist below:

Consideration	Yes	No
Are the students of similar ability?		
Is the class size suitable for the ability of the teacher?		
Can the teacher see all of the students?		
Can the teacher hear all of the students?		
Can the students see the teacher?		
Can the students hear the teacher?		
Can the teacher comfortably interact with all of the students?		
Can the teacher get to all of the students within 5 seconds?		
Has the teaching area been checked for hazards?		
Is the teaching area large enough for the number of students?		
Are the students wearing appropriate clothing?		
Do any of the students have medical conditions that might affect their swimming ability?		

International safeguarding tips (2015)

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

The RNLI believes it is always unacceptable for a child or vulnerable adult to experience any type of abuse. All RNLI international partners must make a commitment to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults by ensuring:

- the welfare of the child and vulnerable adult is of the highest importance
- all children and vulnerable adults – regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious or other beliefs and sexual orientation or identity – have the right to protection from all types of harm and abuse
- that working in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other agencies is key in promoting young people's welfare
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- they are aware of safeguarding practices.

RNLI international partners should refer to country-specific legislation relating to safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, although the following principles will apply:

- A child is considered to be a person under the age of 18 years unless defined as older under local legislation (this would set a minimum).
- A vulnerable adult is someone over the age of 18 years who is in need of community care services for reasons of mental health or other disability, age or illness and is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or is unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. It should be noted that disability or age alone does not signify that an adult is vulnerable.



Best practice in safeguarding

Always:

- ✓ Work in an open environment (such as avoiding private or unobserved situations) and encourage open communication with no secrets.
- ✓ Treat all children and vulnerable adults equally and with respect and dignity. Take time to understand cultural practice and norms and demonstrate understanding in practice.
- ✓ Put the welfare of children or vulnerable adults first.
- ✓ Maintain an appropriate relationship with children and vulnerable adults: physical contact may be appropriate as part of your normal duties (for example administering first aid or protecting a casualty) but should be avoided in any other situation. This also applies in a social context, where RNLI partners should maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- ✓ Build balanced, open relationships based on mutual trust. This allows children and vulnerable adults to share the process of making decisions.
- ✓ If any form of manual/physical support is required, ensure that it is provided openly and according to guidelines. It must follow consultation and agreement with the children or vulnerable people concerned, and their carers.
- ✓ Be an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children.
- ✓ Request written parental/carer consent if children or vulnerable adults need to be transported in a vehicle.

Never:

- ✗ Request a child or vulnerable adult to participate in activity that is not culturally acceptable.
- ✗ Engage in rough, high physical contact or sexually provocative games.
- ✗ Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- ✗ Make sexually suggestive comments to a child/vulnerable adult, even in fun.
- ✗ Allow allegations made by a child/vulnerable adult to go unrecorded or not acted upon.
- ✗ Take children/vulnerable adults to your home or other non work environments where they will be alone with you.

REPORTING

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately in line with the agreed local reporting procedure:

- you accidentally hurt a child/vulnerable adult
- a child/vulnerable adult seems distressed in any manner
- a child/vulnerable adult appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- a child/vulnerable adult misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

You should also ensure the parents/carers are informed.

RESPONDING TO A CONCERN

If you suspect that a child or vulnerable person may be the subject of abuse (or if somebody alerts you to abuse), it is not your responsibility to decide whether abuse has occurred/is occurring. However, it is your duty and your responsibility to report your concern formally.

- **Stay calm**
Do not frighten the child/vulnerable adult and do not rush into actions that may be inappropriate. These might include raising your voice or making physical contact.
- **Reassure**
State that they are not to blame and that they were right to discuss it.
- **Listen**
Believe what the child/vulnerable adult says; show that you are taking what is being said seriously.
- **Keep questions to a minimum**
It is better to refer the matter to professionals as soon as possible.
- **Explain**
You may have to tell other people in order to stop what is happening.
- **Record**
Ensure a record is made with all the information you have been given.
- **Report the incident**
Report the incident, following local procedures.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

Use your local reporting procedure to ensure any incidents are reported promptly and managed appropriately. Please contact your manager to check your local reporting procedure.

You have an Area Coordinator who is responsible for:

- staying informed about all suspected abuse cases and ensuring they are appropriately dealt with
- ensuring appropriate training, information and advice is provided on safeguarding, and that the Safeguarding Policy and procedures are followed and adhered to
- acting as the liaison point with the RNLI International Management Team and RNLI Media Team, as appropriate, to alert them to any impending media interest
- being responsible for safeguarding records and updates
- offering advice and guidance
- informing the RNLI of any incident, where relevant.

Your manager will also be able to provide you with a copy of the Safeguarding Policy.

IFSTA: International Federation of Swimming Teachers' Associations

L&D: Learning and development

NGO: Non-governmental organisation

PPE: Personal protective equipment

RLSS UK: Royal Life Saving Society United Kingdom

RNLI: Royal National Lifeboat Institution

SAR: Search and rescue

WHO: World Health Organization

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