

# NATIONAL Beach Lifeguard QUALIFICATION



*lifesavers*  
The Royal Life Saving Society UK



## Guidance & Syllabus

### Aim

The assessment is designed to determine the competence of anyone engaged at any time in the role of a Beach Lifeguard or undergoing training towards this role.

The Beach Lifeguard is deemed to be responsible for safety at open water sites either inland or at coastal, surf, river and estuarial locations

### Objectives

The training and assessment is **not site specific** and reflects the generic knowledge and skills following a course of training in lifeguard practices which shall include:

- physical fitness
- self-discipline
- safety supervision
- teamwork
- rescue skills and techniques
- use and maintenance of rescue equipment
- beach safety operating procedures

This initial assessment is a measure of basic ability and should be followed by regular in-service training at recognised open water recreational locations, which must test competence to apply knowledge and skill in the 'operational' environment. A written schedule of in-service training is essential.

The record of the assessment should state where the open water section was conducted.

Life

Save

Life

Guard

Life

Save

Life

Guard

Life

## Guidelines

Issue 3 version 1

### Definitions

The expression 'Beach' is used generically to describe an area - usually covered by sand or pebbles, but possibly a man-made surface - forming a shoreline or sloping bank at the edge of the sea, a lake, riverbank or river estuary.

### Trainers

Training for many of the skills within the framework of the syllabus requires a high degree of specialised knowledge. Therefore, such training must be undertaken by an RLSS UK Beach Lifeguard Trainer Assessor who is able to demonstrate all skills required especially the use of equipment.

### Training Schedules

The training schedules and the results of continuous assessment must be made available to the Assessor prior to the assessment.

Where lifeguards are employed the trainer is strongly advised to have records validated by a responsible person e.g. 'Beach Patrol Officer', Training Officer who acts as an internal verifier. This person within the training organisation should ensure that the administration, training and assessing takes place in accordance with current RLSS UK guidelines.

### Training

Training must be provided by an RLSS UK Beach Trainer Assessor, who must be present throughout the programme. The open water training should take place at recognised recreational locations. The training team can also include those employed in a lifeguard role and who have knowledge of the local area as well as those with specialist RLSS UK Beach TA skills.

The maximum number of candidates on a course must be no more than 12 candidates for each RLSS UK Qualified Beach TA, and no more than 8 candidates on a course conducted by a probationary Beach TA.

The minimum training time is 32 hours for a new candidate. Assessment time is in addition to training time. There may be occasions where all candidates on a single course may have extensive previous knowledge or achievement AP(E)L. In this case the TA may apply in writing to RLSS UK Lifesaving Department for a dispensation of up to 12 hours depending upon the relevance of AP(E)L

Exemptions may apply to holders of the following awards and qualifications. (The number of hours exempt are shown in brackets.)

- Current RLSS UK NPLQ, Bronze Medallion or higher award (12 hours)
- Current RLSS UK Life Support 3 (3 hours)
- Current HSE Approved FAW (9 hours)

Please refer to the appropriate APL Statement to identify skills exempt and the breakdown of training required. (APL statements are available from RLSS UK Lifesaving Department).

Whatever awards or qualifications are held candidates may not be awarded more than 12 hours AP(E)L in total and will be required to undertake a period of training of no less than 20 hours. This detail will be monitored and recorded by the Trainer. Candidates must produce their original certificates to confirm AP(E)L and the trainer will keep a copy to support the reduced training hours.

Where the Beach Trainer Assessor is also a FAW Lay Instructor an Emergency Aid Certificate may be awarded to successful candidates providing the Trainer registered such a course with their FAW Training Provider.

Candidates renewing an existing qualification should have been involved in continuous ongoing in-service training (INSET) over 24 months totalling a minimum of 20 hours. Training must cover the complete range of skills within the syllabus and be recorded in the operators records and the candidates CPD record. All training must be undertaken in the presence of a current RLSS UK Beach TA.

Lifeguards must renew their qualification within the validity period (24 months from the date shown on their Certificate).

AP(E)L is not relevant in the context of renewals. Where a qualification has expired candidates should quote their original lifeguard number on the assessment report form, but will be required to pay the full assessment fee. Any training verified by a current RLSS UK Beach TA during the previous 24 months may be used towards the required 32 hours.

Where training records are not produced the assessment must not take place.

### Training Resources

Each course should have available:

Training Publications

Beach Lifeguard

Safety on Beaches

Safety at Inland Water Sites

Resuscitation Training Equipment

Approved manikins for adult, child and infant, plus provision for hygienic cleaning

Pocket masks

First Aid training kit in accordance with the criteria in the approved CoP L74

Personal Rescue Equipment

Torpedo buoy

Fins

Throw bag

Reaching devices if appropriate to the venue

## Safety/NOP/EAP (Rescue Plans) for Trainers and Assessors

Trainers are reminded to take into consideration all safety precautions. This is especially important with regard to cold water immersion of both candidates and casualties. Trainer Assessors should be aware of any local conditions and regulations. Refer also to RLSS UK Code of Practice and Policy Statements - current editions.

## Registration

All training courses must be registered at RLSS UK, River House at least 10 days before they commence. RLSS UK will allocate a course reference number. Assessment registration is required, following which RLSS UK will forward forms for both NBLQ and Life Support 3 Award or higher life support equivalent.

The qualification comprises core competencies covering the following elements:

- Lifeguard Theory
- Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation
- First Aid
- Pool skills
- Open water skills

Successful independent assessment of these elements complete Unit 1.

Unit 2 assesses the application of skills at the training centre.

## Specialist additional units

There are a number of optional, certificated units. These may be assessed during the same assessment session but after the assessment of core skills or may be assessed at any other time during the validity of the qualification.

The Beach Operator can, following a Safety Audit of their beaches, select the Specialist Units that are applicable and appropriate to the operation of the local lifeguard service.

The Specialist Units include:

- Rescue paddle craft (including Ski, Malibu, Canoe suitable for patrol and rescue, Paddle board, Rowing boat),
- Rescue Boat - RLSS UK Crew and Helm
- Personal Water Craft (PWC)
- Extended Life Support - Oxygen / AED

## Assessment and selection of Assessors

The assessment is in five sections:

- Knowledge
- Life Support
- First Aid
- Pool
- Beach

The assessment must be carried out by a fully qualified RLSS UK Beach Lifeguard Trainer Assessor whose name appears on the current list of RLSS UK Trainer Assessors. The assessor must show evidence of current membership to RLSS UK and a current RLSS UK Beach Trainer Assessor Card of Authority.

RLSS UK Beach TAs who have completed the RLSS UK Life Support Unit are authorised to assess Life Support 3 Award or higher life support equivalent, this may be awarded as part of the RLSS UK Beach Lifeguard Qualification should the candidate wish on payment of the additional fee.

## Assessment Period

The whole assessment must be satisfactorily completed within a 28 day period. Any deviation from this must be applied for in writing to RLSS UK Lifesaving Department. Specialist units may be assessed at the same time as Unit 1 and Unit 2. Other Specialist units may be undertaken at any time during the validity of the qualification.

## Assessment Organisation

No more than four candidates may be assessed at any one time by one assessor. The elements A, B C and D may be undertaken in any order. Element D must be completed before Element E.

### *Element A Beach Lifeguard Theory*

questions and responses must be in accordance with the principles and practices set out in the current RLSS UK publication Beach Lifeguard and must assess the candidate's underpinning knowledge.

### *Element B CPR*

a candidate holding a current Life Support 3 Award or higher life support equivalent may be exempt from the practical assessments and questions with the exception of the demonstration using a pocket mask for adult CPR as well as a demonstration of an efficient changeover to another trained operator.

### *Element C First Aid*

a candidate holding a current FAW certification may be given an exemption from the practical assessments and questions with the exception of the initiative test.

### *Element D Pool Practical*

must be completed in one uninterrupted session and follow the sequence of tests laid down.

### *Element E Open Water Practical*

must be completed during one day but the tests may be taken in any order at the discretion of the assessor to suit local conditions.

A separate Assessor may assess any of the five sections. Where tests do not require a timed element the assessor will expect a degree of urgency to be demonstrated in all practical tests as would be the case in a real emergency.

## Assessment Organisation continued.,

No more than 3 groups of candidates may be assessed in any 24 hour period by the same Assessor. No Assessor may conduct more than three consecutive assessments for the same Trainer.

The assessment of candidates by an independent Assessor at the conclusion of a training course should be seen as the culmination of the training and assessment programme and a part of the overall continuous assessment of candidates. The Trainer will discuss the progress of each candidate on an individual basis throughout the duration of the course.

## Assessment Location

The assessment is not 'site specific' and the sections of the test will reflect the generic skills needed for all beach lifeguarding operations.

## Medical considerations

Training to be a beach lifeguard involves physical exertion in both indoor pool and outdoor environments. The open water environment also involves variable temperatures of cold water. If a candidate has any medical condition which might impair them they would be advised to contact their GP before undertaking the training course.

Candidates should be able to dive, without risk to their hearing, to a maximum depth of 2m. It may be appropriate for candidates to seek medical advice with regard to diving to depths greater than 1.5m. Trainers and Assessors MUST advise candidates of the dangers inherent in diving to depths greater than 1.5m.

## Equal Opportunities Policy

RLSS UK is committed to the principal of equal opportunities and as an awarding body, has a legal responsibility to take such steps as maybe considered reasonably practicable to prevent unlawful discrimination on account of race, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, religious convictions, religious beliefs or disability. All of RLSS UK's policies, practices and procedures relating to the terms upon which it is prepared to confer, grant or withdraw its qualifications are administered equally and in accordance with all applicable laws.

RLSS UK takes great care to ensure the standardisation of all assessments. In the event that a candidate requires special assessment arrangements arising out of a disability, special needs, or foreign language translation requirements at the time of assessment, then TAs should contact RLSS UK Lifesaving Department 15 working days prior to the assessment date to ascertain whether these special requirements can be met.

If special arrangements are made, RLSS UK will carefully consider the nature of the assessment to ensure that the standard of the assessment remains consistent.

It is RLSS UKs policy to give full and fair consideration to all candidates who are disabled and to make the appropriate arrangements to enable them to participate in the training programmes. However, due to the requirements of the role of a lifeguard, and in accordance with the RLSS UK's overriding duty to comply with health and safety legislation, it will not always be possible to accept applications from disabled candidates.

## Pre-requisites, Candidate Fitness and Preparation for Assessment

### Pre-requisites

Candidates must be 16 years of age or over at the time of commencing training for the assessment.

### Fitness preparation

Prior to attending a training course, it is recommended that candidates should be able to swim 100m on the front, 100m on their back and also swim 200m in less than 4 minutes. Candidates should be able to surface dive to a depth of 2m, tread water for 2 minutes and climb out of deep water unaided and without using the steps.

### Dress for Assessment (Elements D & E only - but with exception of test D1)

### Candidate

Normal patrol wear, minimum uniform of t-shirt, shorts and footwear. Wetsuits may be worn for Element E. Footwear may be discarded during swim rescues if it is safe to do so. A high visibility Lifeguard cap or swim cap must be worn for Element E.

Goggles may be worn at any time during the training but not during the assessment of the water tests. Where candidates wear spectacles, these may be removed prior to entering the water. Candidates are responsible for and should make suitable arrangements for their safe-keeping. Candidates may wear goggles for the timed pool swim only.

Jewellery, including body jewellery must be removed during training and assessment. A trainer / assessor will insist that jewellery is removed if it is likely to create a hazard for the candidate or person acting as a casualty.

### Casualty: Swimwear

Wet suits may be worn for Element E (Beach).

A high visibility swim cap must also be worn for Element E, this is compulsory.

## Validity

The RLSS UK NBLQ is valid for 24 months from the date shown on the candidate's certificate. Unit 1 and Unit 2 should be concluded within 28 days of the final section of Unit 1 being successfully completed. The date on the certificate will be the date of completion of Unit 2.

## Assessment Structure and Guidance Notes

An independent RLSS UK qualified Assessor will assess the candidate's ability to demonstrate competence through sound knowledge, an understanding of the principles of beach lifeguarding and safe practices. The candidate will be expected to answer questions both individually and as part of a team.

The practical assessment will require candidates to demonstrate competence in those skills contained in current RLSS UK publications as noted under 'Training Resources'. Training records and information concerning the conduct of the programme must be made available by the Trainer to the Assessor prior to the assessment. Failure to provide such documentation will make the assessment void.

The Unit 1 assessment is in five sections followed by the Unit 2 assessment. All elements of both units must be successfully completed before the candidates can qualify.

## Assessment fees

Candidates shall pay the full assessment fee as published by RLSS UK. Any candidate who fails any section of the assessment shall forfeit the fee.

There is a separate fee for new candidates and for renewal candidates.

## Assessment forms

It is the responsibility of the Course Trainer to prepare NBLQ and if applicable, Life Support 3 Award or equivalent assessment forms. When completed by the Assessors, it remains the Trainer's responsibility to forward all forms and fees directly to RLSS UK for processing.

The Assessor must tick the relevant boxes indicating equipment used during the Unit 2 practical assessment. This does not automatically mean that the candidate is entitled to receive any corresponding specialist unit accreditations.

The specialist units have individual assessment criteria and this could only be added to the assessment report form if the candidate has successfully completed the criteria in addition to that in units 1 and 2.

## Management of the Assessment of the Beach Element Communication with Beach Operators and Trainer / Assessor (see also the RLSS UK Code of Practice and Policy Statements [current editions])

### 1 Liaison with Beach Operator

SAFETY is a vital element of beach training and assessment. A regular lifeguard patrol area must be identified with a SHELTERED area for protection against the elements and for CHANGING. The foreshore should be checked for suitable POINTS of ENTRY and EXIT.

Organisers of Beach Lifeguard Assessments are advised to contact the Beach operator and to liaise with them to ensure that swimming activities are safe at the venue.

### 2 Liaison with the Trainer

Liaison with the trainer responsible for presenting candidates and ensure any medical conditions are made known.

### 3 Beach Safety Operating Procedures

Beach Safety Procedures or Instructions should be noted and acted upon where necessary.

Where necessary notify local emergency services about the event to ensure false alarms are not raised by members of the public who might observe an assessment.

Knowledge of the water and weather conditions should be obtained from the MCA or relevant governing bodies.

***THE SERVICES OF EXPERIENCED BEACH LIFEGUARDS SHOULD BE OBTAINED AS NECESSARY. THERE MUST BE A RESCUE CAPABILITY TO EFFECT A SIMULTANEOUS RESCUE OF EVERYONE IN THE WATER SHOULD THIS PROVE NECESSARY.***

Adequate safety provision must be made for all swimmers moving more than 20m from shoreline. This may include a rescue craft, or rescue board and be appropriate to the conditions. Appropriate First Aid and communications equipment must be provided in accordance with Beach Safety Operating Procedures.

A check of water and weather conditions, both before and during the assessment must be made. Safety provision must include any warnings to other water users. Care should be taken when water frequented by boats, other watercraft or water skiers is used.

All candidates and casualties must wear high visibility hats.

Candidates must remain in visual contact with the shore or boat throughout and should not be allowed to become widely separated from each other.

Confirm the Beach safety arrangements and provision has been made for the whole period of the assessment (Beach Section).

### 4 Water Depth

Ensure the Assessment Area at the beach has sufficient water depth for all parts of the assessment to be carried out.

## 3rd Edition Syllabus

Assessment syllabus - The qualification is in two units

Unit 1 Principles of beach supervision and rescue

Unit 2 The application of beach safety management and rescue procedures

### Unit 1 - Principles of beach supervision and rescue

#### Element A - Beach Lifeguarding - Knowledge

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the following by answering one question from each heading below and an additional two questions selected at random:

- Water Safety
- Accident Prevention
- Hazard Identification
- The Principles of Beach Safety Operating Procedures (NOP/EAP)
- The Principles of Communication Systems
- Principles and Methods of Rescue
- Observation & Zoning
- Dealing with the Public
- Use and Maintenance of Basic Rescue Equipment.

Questions and responses must be in accordance with the principles and practices set out in the current RLSS UK publication Beach Lifeguard and must assess the candidates underpinning knowledge.

#### Element B - CPR

Candidates may be exempt from parts of Section B (with the exception of a demonstration of an approved pocket mask and an efficient changeover to another trained operator) if they hold a current Life Support 3 or higher life support equivalent award but Assessors may ask any candidate to demonstrate competence in any section.

Note that the assessment of CPR for adult; child or infant resuscitation may be taken in any order. Successful candidates will be credited with the RLSS UK Life Support 3 award or higher life support equivalent at the time of their NBLQ assessment upon payment of the additional assessment fee.

Candidates must demonstrate competence in the following:

#### B1 Demonstration of assessment and treatment of a simulated unconscious casualty

Demonstrate on a live simulated casualty, the following:

- Show competence in checking for dangers and casualty response
- Show competence in turning a casualty from a face down to face up position and opening their airway
- Show competence in demonstrating action for vomiting
- Show competence in demonstrating placing the casualty in the recovery position

#### B2 Demonstration of Adult CPR

Demonstrate on an approved adult manikin, the assessment of a casualty who has suddenly collapsed and is not breathing normally.

- The candidate will demonstrate single operator CPR for a period of 2 minutes.
- The Assessor will ask for a change of mouth to mouth to mouth to nose rescue breaths.
- The candidate will demonstrate an efficient changeover to another trained operator
- Demonstrate single operator CPR using an approved pocket mask for a further period of up to 2 minutes.

#### B3 Child CPR

Demonstrate cardiopulmonary resuscitation on an approved child manikin for 3 minutes.

#### B4 Infant CPR

Demonstrate cardiopulmonary resuscitation on an approved infant manikin for 3 minutes.

#### B5 Incident management

Show competence in the application of life support skills in a staged incident that requires the demonstration, the diagnosis and treatment of two casualties.

#### B6 Knowledge and Understanding of Basic Life Support

Demonstrate underpinning knowledge and understanding of the following by answering one question from each heading below:

- Basic life support sequence
- Difference in life support for adults, children, and infants
- Choking
- Bleeding
- Shock
- Hypothermia
- Drowning

Questions and responses must be in accordance with the principles and practices set out in the current RLSS UK publication Beach Lifeguard.

## Element C - First Aid

### C1 Knowledge

Demonstrate underpinning knowledge and understanding of the following by answering one question from each heading below:

- Fractures (including aquatic spinal injury)
- Marine injuries
- Heatstroke and sunburn
- Burns / scalds
- Hypothermia and cold shock
- Dressings/bandages
- Poisons

Questions and responses must be in accordance with the principles and practices set out in the current RLSS UK publication Beach Lifeguard.

### C2 First Aid Incident Management

This test forms part of Unit 2, the application of lifeguard skills and knowledge.

## Element D - Practical Assessment - Pool

*Renewal Candidates - Where a qualified lifeguard is renewing the NBLQ the candidate will only be required to undertake Section D1 (Timed Swim) providing that the criteria for training records have been met.*

### D1 Timed Swim

- In swim wear, swim 400m in 8 minutes or less. The 200m time will also be recorded. Goggles may be worn.

### D2 Unconscious casualty rescue

- Using a torpedo buoy, swim 100m to a floating casualty who can be considered to be unconscious and not breathing normally.
- Demonstrate deep water supported Rescue Breathing and return over 100m to a point of entry.
- Continue Rescue Breathing on the return.
- Land with trained assistance and place the casualty in the recovery position.

### D3 Personal safety

- **Demonstrate two defences**
- **Demonstrate two releases**
- **Rescue of two locked swimmers**
- Taking a torpedo buoy, enter the water and swim up to 10m to two casualties in deep water who are locked together.
- Effect a rescue and bring both casualties to safety.

## Element E - Practical Assessment - Beach

*No candidate may take this section until Element D has been successfully completed.*

### E1 Unconscious Casualty rescue

- An unconscious casualty has disappeared from sight 50m beyond waist depth. A second lifeguard is available to direct the candidate to the point at which the casualty was last sighted.
- Taking a torpedo buoy, enter the water and swim to a point as directed by the second lifeguard.
- On reaching that point, submerge and show evidence of having reached the bottom (maximum depth 2m).
- Collect and return the casualty to a point of secure, stable support giving supported Rescue Breathing regularly on the return.
- Land the casualty with assistance and carry out CPR (using an approved pocket mask) on a recognised manikin continuously for 2 minutes with a team member taking over CPR after 2 minutes.

### E2 Conscious Casualty rescue

- A conscious casualty is in difficulty in deep water 200m from the point of entry.
- The lifeguard is on land 400m from that point of entry. Taking a torpedo buoy, carry out a run-swim-tow rescue of the casualty.
- Run 400m, enter the water and swim 200m to a casualty and tow 200m to a point on land.
- On returning to the beach, treat the casualty for hypothermia, with assistance from the lifeguard team.

*Note - swim fins are permitted but all equipment must be carried from the start of the test.*

### E3 Rescue of two locked swimmers

- Taking a torpedo buoy, enter the water and swim between 15m and 25m to deep water to two casualties who are locked together.
- Effect a rescue and bring both casualties to safety.

# RLSS UK National Beach Lifeguard Qualification

## Unit 2 - Application of beach safety management and rescue procedures

### Introduction

This unit is intended to take the skills and knowledge acquired during the Unit 1, Principles of beach supervision and rescue, training and puts them into an applied environment that relates to the specific nature and equipment of the venue at which training is being delivered.

Employment at the training facility is NOT a prerequisite for completion of the elements of either unit. All participants on a course can complete both of the units at the training venue and training programmes should be structured to ensure that this can be done. As such, there is open access to all participants to gain the full qualification.

Where a lifeguard is employed elsewhere, it is a management responsibility to ensure that, for the new venue, the relevant site specific material is incorporated into an induction course and that participation in this training is recorded in the lifeguard's development record. The beach/open water operator should also record such training and satisfactory outcomes in their health and safety/training records.

Unit 2 training may only be delivered by a RLSS UK Beach Trainer Assessor familiar with the venue to ensure that basic health and safety principles are met.

### Practical Assessment

*Work within the Beach Safety Operating Procedures at the training and assessment venue to effectively manage an emergency incident.*

The test should include appropriate elements of the Normal Operating Plan as well as the implementation of the Emergency Action Plan in dealing with an emergency. This may not need to be a major emergency but should provide the opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate a sound knowledge of their role, demonstrate a wide range of skills and utilise equipment provided at the site. Skills assessed may include spinal injury management.

The number of 'casualties' will depend on the operating procedures as the candidate may be patrolling individually or as part of a team of lifeguards. If the site provides for lifeguards to cover a zone independently the incident should necessitate the need to call additional team support. The incident should not involve more than three casualties in a team situation but must incorporate the following:

- The management of an in-water casualty
- The management of a casualty requiring first aid

Following completion of the practical test the candidate will complete the appropriate post-incident paperwork and answer questions to justify their actions to demonstrate their underpinning knowledge of their skills.

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