

Safe swimming and boating at sea



The peninsulas and islands in Zeeland are surrounded by water on all sides. About 600 km of coastline and the water around us provide a lot of fun for both residents and holidaymakers. Unfortunately, not everyone is aware of how unpredictable and dangerous the sea can be. This webpage provides tips on how to safely enjoy swimming and boating in the sea. The Zeeland KNRM rescue stations also inform you of any dangers in their region.

Swimming in the sea

- The sea is not a large swimming pool; it has various dangers such as currents, waves and the effects of strong winds. Always keep that in mind.
- Flags in different colours along the coast indicate whether it is safe to swim in the sea. These beach flags are only found in places where there is a lifeguard. You can read everything about the flags and what they mean on this website.
- Keep an eye on each other. If you see someone in danger, take immediate action and warn others as well as the lifeguard or rescue team.

Be prepared when going out to sea

- Listen to the weather reports.
- Collect information about your waterway, make sure you know which confluences you encounter and how to pass through them safely.
- Wear clearly visible clothing.
- Make sure that your vessel is in good technical condition.

Safety on the water

- Always follow the navigation rules and wear a life jacket.
- Be aware of your surroundings and communicate with other skippers if necessary.
- Pass other ships, ferries, bridges and locks correctly.
- Cross safely.

What should I do if something goes wrong?

- Use the emergency button on your VHF radio to send a DSC alert on channel 70. If that is not possible, alert the coastguard on VHF channel 16—in the Netherlands you call Den Helder Rescue. If you request search assistance, all ships in the area must also help search.
- If you only have a mobile phone, hope for coverage and call the Coast Guard on 0900-0111 or the emergency services on 112. A VHF radio is always a better means of raising the alarm as you have the advantage of ships in the area hearing it.
- In all cases, the Coast Guard will ask you for your position and the conditions. Aside from your GPS position, also mention your approximate location.
- More tips about safety at sea can be found on the KNRM (Royal Dutch Rescue Society) website. Or install the 'KNRM helpt' app on your phone. This information is only available in Dutch.