

Waves and wind safety – top 5 tips

Although this week's earlier storm weather warnings have been downgraded, HM Coastguard's Tago Mcleod who is based at Falmouth in Cornwall says people should not relax and stay on safety alert while on the coast.

'The winds are still going to be strong and the mix of wind, bigger than usual tidal swells and large, unpredictable waves can very easily catch people out. It's human nature to relax a little more when storm warnings have been downgraded but the real risks still remain. It's why we're asking everyone to take extra care and keep well away from breaking waves, piers and jetties and keep well back from cliff edges this weekend,' he said.

Wind and wave safety – top 5 safety tips

1. Selfies; It's not worth risking your life for 'that selfie'. Keep off groynes, piers, jetties and harbour walls. Big waves can knock you over in a flash. If you can feel the spray, you're too close.
2. Wave dodging; playing 'dares' with waves is dangerous in the best of weathers. Rocks and walls can be slippery, often there's nothing to grab hold of if you're caught off balance and rogue waves and strong currents can sweep you out to sea in seconds.
3. Doggie dont's; do keep your canine friends close and on leads if you're out on the cliffs or the coast. You never know when an 'interesting' smell or meeting another dog can lead to trouble. If your dog gets stuck or trapped, call the coastguard for help, we have teams out and about at all times, trained for fast response.
4. Cliff crises; avoid a crisis on the cliffs by staying well away from the edges, especially in windy conditions when you and children are at risk of being caught off balance. During and after bad weather, cliff faces are especially unstable and landslides and rock falls are common.
5. Keep in touch; keep a note of tide times so you don't get trapped and take a fully charged mobile (ideally with a location or 'find me' app) so you can call for help if things go wrong. Let someone know where you're going and when you'll be back.

If you or anyone is in trouble on the coast, don't delay calling for help. It's better to be safe than sorry. Call 999 and ask for the coastguard.

Grants awarded from £1.6m partnership between government and Co-op Foundation

A £1.6 million partnership between the Government and Co-op's charity, the [Co-op Foundation](#), will help communities across the country tackle loneliness by improving and protecting local spaces that bring people together.

[Space to Connect](#) has today awarded an initial round of almost £900,000 to 57 community organisations across England. The grants of up to £50,000 will support projects that use spaces to address local challenges or expand activities.

The partnership follows commitments made in the Government's [Civil Society](#) and [Loneliness Strategies](#), published in 2018, to help create sustainable community hubs and spaces where they are most needed.

Funding also builds on the Co-op Foundation's work to strengthen community spaces where people can connect and co-operate.

The following organisations are amongst those to have received grants through Space to Connect:

- [Charles Burrell Centre, Norfolk](#) (£42,456): A community hub based in a former school building will increase activities and use of its community cafe to bring more people together.
- [Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race and Equality Centre](#) (£35,623): Funding will improve facilities at the centre, create a booking system, and fund staff at a multicultural hub. This will help to expand on existing work, address gaps in service provision and make the space more welcoming.
- [Exeter Community Centre Trust Ltd](#) (£40,000): The grant will help refurbish and revamp the top floor of their community centre improving opportunities for the local community to take part in activities.
- [FISCUS North Limited, Sunderland](#) (£33,987): This will enable a mapping exercise of local needs and priorities, support staff costs, and explore plans for a health and well-being space in a shipping container to support the needs of the local community.

- [Hurst Farm Social Club, Matlock](#) (£38,767): The funding will support community engagement and youth activities, as well as developing an older people's café to reduce isolation and increase income at their social club on a deprived estate.
- [Liverpool and Merseyside Theatres Trust](#) (£40,343): The grant will support increased opening hours, so the community has greater access to the theatre. The grant will also fund work to develop a partnership with a health provider that offers social prescribing.
- [St Werburghs City Farm, Bristol](#) (£46,808): This funding will create an online horticultural training programme that can be sold to generate income, and will enable intensive engagement activities to increase inclusion and diversity at the farm.
- [Sussex Community Development Association](#) (£49,728): The funding will support the refurbishment of a new community centre, completing the transformation from an older people's day-centre to a multi-purpose community asset.
- [The Bromley by Bow Centre](#) (£47,949): The grant will support planning and infrastructure support, training for volunteer leaders and the creation of a toolkit to develop financial sustainability across the community spaces they run.
- [The Garage Trust Ltd, Norwich](#) (£49,755): The funding will support weekly art classes in a community building dedicated to improving people's lives through art.
- [Trowbridge Town Hall Trust, Wiltshire](#) (£49,984): Will be invested in increasing the use of the building, improving facilities and business sustainability planning to ensure a positive future for a historic building now run by the community.

Minister for Civil Society, Baroness Barran, said:

Strong communities play a crucial role in tackling loneliness and social isolation. This £1.6 million worth of funding will create and enhance local spaces that bring people together, encouraging them to make new and lasting friendships.

It is part of our ongoing commitment to work hand in hand with local communities to build a shared, integrated and socially responsible society.

Jim Cooke, Head of the Co-op Foundation, said:

Our Space to Connect partnership with Government builds on our commitment to strengthen communities and tackle loneliness through co-operation.

Grants awarded today will empower people to work together to make better use of spaces to address local challenges, improving the well-being and skills of their whole community.

[Space to Connect](#) was launched in June 2019, at the same time as Co-op's [Endangered Spaces](#) campaign to protect, support and improve 2,000 community spaces by 2022.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

[Space to Connect](#) is a joint partnership between DCMS and the Co-op Foundation, with both parties investing £800,000.

Support is split into two strands: organisations receiving 'Enhance' grants of up to £50,000 will use the investment to expand activities in spaces to make them more sustainable. 'Explore' partners will use up to £10,000 to identify ways to make better use of spaces so they can address challenges, like loneliness and access to community activities.

Applications to this fund are now closed. 'Explore' projects will have the opportunity to apply for further [Space to Connect](#) funding in March 2020 to continue their work.

Co-op's Endangered Spaces campaign is part of Co-operate 2022 – Co-op's wider community vision for the next three years that will see it work on key areas that make communities stronger – community spaces, wellbeing, and education and skills.

About Co-op Foundation

- Co-op Foundation is the Co-op's charity, helping communities UK-wide work together to make things better.
- Co-op Foundation is the leading charity tackling youth loneliness in the UK. By 2021, its Belong programme will:
- Connect and empower at least 7,500 young people to take action to tackle loneliness
- Strengthen local youth services that provide vital support and opportunities
- Engage at least 25,000 young people in a national conversation that breaks down the stigma of youth loneliness.

[Co-op Foundation](#) provides interest-free loans and grants to help eligible organisations improve local spaces that strengthen communities, and grow

their incomes so they can sustain these spaces longer-term.

Motorists urged to be deer aware

At this time of year, deer collisions peak as many of the animals cross roads seeking new territories. The highest risk of collisions is between sunset and midnight, and the hours shortly before and after sunrise.

Someone who knows only too well what it is like to be involved in a collision with deer is Aaron Herringshaw.

Aaron, a chef from Bournemouth with a regular commute across rural Dorset, said:

I know what the consequences are and the literal impact of a collision with a deer having been unfortunate enough to experience two incidents in eighteen months. Both collisions were really distressing and resulted in my car being written off, which takes time to sort out and means my insurance has gone up, but I am thankful that no-one got hurt.

Both incidents happened during my early morning drive to work at around 5.30am on roads that I know well and travel on frequently. I am aware of the wildlife in the area and weather-wise it was clear but both times a deer leapt out of the hedge in right front of my car with absolutely no warning. The impact is quite scary as you have no control of the vehicle in that split second – it is somewhat surreal because you're not expecting that to happen first thing in the morning.

I have always considered myself to be a safe and careful driver – if it happens to me it could happen to anyone. I have changed my driving style to be even more vigilant and I am always on the look-out for deer warning signs. You don't know when or how a collision could occur – the deer warning signs are there for a reason. They give you that extra bit of information that wildlife is in the area and to slow down and be extra cautious.

So today The Deer Initiative and Highways England have teamed up to back up the advice to drivers.

Leonardo Gubert, Senior Ecologist at Highways England, the Government company responsible for motorways and major A roads in England, said:

You may be well-travelled and on a well-known route without ever

seeing a deer before, but there may be one hidden in nearby foliage or woodlands and some species of deer can often gather in large groups; you may have seen one and avoided it but others may follow and unexpectedly dart out into the roadway. You may have also seen deer signs at locations where you have never spotted deer but the fact is that they have been installed in areas with high deer numbers and their purpose is to alert drivers that there is a higher possibility of encountering them along that particular stretch of road.

We want everyone travelling on our roads to reach their destination safely and with as many as 1.5 million wild deer living across Britain it is vital for drivers to be aware of their presence, to be extra vigilant, especially at this time of year when deer are on the move.

Deer signs are placed at locations where the animals are known to be active and are likely to cross; they help inform drivers of the need to slow down to give more time to react.

David Jam, Director of The Deer Initiative, said:

Whilst deer are a constant risk to drivers, they are especially active during Autumn and Spring, especially at dusk and dawn. To stay as safe as possible on the roads, please take note of the following advice:

After dark, do use full-beams when there is no opposing traffic: the headlight beam will illuminate the eyes of deer on or near a roadway and provide greater driver reaction time; BUT, when a deer is seen on the road, dim your headlights as when startled by the beam they may 'freeze' rather than leaving the road.

When approaching deer warning signs, drivers should slow down and be prepared to stop.

Figures collated from several studies suggest that while it is safe to say 40,000 deer are killed in vehicle collisions every year, this figure could be as high as 74,000 across Britain. Conservative estimates of 400 injuries to motorists and passengers related to these collisions could in fact be nearer 1000 annually with up to 20 fatalities per year.

Accurate records of deer-vehicle collisions are vital as they help build an accurate picture of the roads most at risk of deer collision which can then be assessed, and appropriate measures to tackle the issue can be put in place. Drivers are urged to report any incidents via the [Deer Aware website](#).

Highways England works with partners including the Deer Initiative to identify deer-related collision 'hotspots' and to take appropriate measures to reduce the risk, including installing deer proof fencing and constructing

larger culverts which provide an alternative route for deer to cross the road.

If you hit a deer while driving, your priorities in this order are:

- Keep yourself and anyone with you as safe as you can.
- Park your car in the safest place with hazard lights on. Consider using it to also warn other road users.
- Call an ambulance if human injuries warrant it.
- Call the police.

To report a deer vehicle collision or to find out more on safety advice visit the [Deer Aware website](#).

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[A decade of flood forecasting: saving lives](#)

This has led to an evolution in the UK's ability to forecast, mitigate against and respond to flood events. The Flood Forecasting Centre ([FFC](#)) was set up in 2009 bringing together [Met Office](#) meteorologists and [Environment Agency](#) hydrologists to provide crucial, timely warnings to emergency responders helping them make the critical decisions that save livelihoods and keep people safe.

Floods Minister Rebecca Pow said: "It has been fascinating to see first-hand the incredible work taking place at the Flood Forecasting Centre as we celebrate its 10-year anniversary. This week alone, the FFC's forecasts have helped colleagues at the Environment Agency to issue well over 200 flood alerts and warnings to help keep homes, businesses and communities safe.

"I'm looking forward to seeing how the FFC develops an even deeper understanding of how we predict and prepare for weather events over the coming years. This work builds on the government's £2.6 billion investment in new flood schemes to better protect 300,000 homes by 2021."

The FFC was set up in 2009, following recommendations made in the Pitt Review, to better understand how rainfall impacts river catchments and flash flooding. Over the 10 years since its inception it has helped reduce the impact of a number of extreme weather events, including:

[Wainfleet](#), June 2019 – parts of Lincolnshire saw around 2.5 times the monthly average rainfall between 10-12 June. The Met Office issued severe weather warnings for rain several days in advance enabling the Flood Forecasting Centre to provide timely, key information to the Environment Agency incident room in Lincoln which was then able to issue a severe flood warning to local residents. This led to the successful evacuation of around 600 homes – meaning nobody was harmed.

[Winter storms of 2013/14](#), From mid-December to early January, the UK experienced a spell of extreme weather as a succession of major winter storms brought widespread impacts to the UK. Initially most of the weather impacts related to the strong winds, however, as rainfall totals accumulated the focus of concern turned to flooding, including large river catchments such as the Severn and Thames. FFC guidance enabled emergency responders and local communities to make strategic decisions, such as moving huge water pumps onto the Somerset Levels, which mitigated impacts and protected lives and property.

Met Office Chief Executive Professor Penny Endersby said; “Climate projections ([UKCP18](#)) suggest that whilst the UK may begin to experience drier summers overall, summer storms are likely to be more intense, and we are likely to see warmer but wetter winters in future, both of which will have a crucial bearing on the FFC’s operations. The risk and impacts of flooding are likely to increase over the coming years, so we will need to continue to adapt our services. As we look to the future it is clear that through collaboration and cooperation, together we can ensure that the UK can continue stay safe and thrive.”

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, said: “It’s great to be back in Exeter to celebrate 10 highly successful years of this essential life-saving multi-agency service. The FFC is part of the heroic unseen efforts that go on 24/7 to help protect people and properties against the risk of flooding.

“Our flood defences reduce the risk of flooding, and our flood warnings help keep communities safe when it threatens. But we can never entirely eliminate the risk of flooding. Checking your flood risk on gov.uk is a crucial step towards protecting yourself, your loved ones and your home.”

Forecasting skills are constantly evolving and developing thanks to world leading, cutting-edge science and technology and the collaboration between the Met Office and the Environment Agency. With higher maximum daily temperatures and more intense rainfall affecting the UK the impacts of flooding are likely to be greater in coming decades. The ability to accurately forecast flood events will therefore become ever more important.

Government provides more funds for local authority air quality action

The government has announced the latest round of funding to help local authorities improve air quality across England.

Since it was established, the [Air Quality Grant](#) scheme has awarded more than £61 million to a variety of projects, benefitting schools, businesses and residents, reducing the impact on people's health and creating cleaner and healthier environments.

Local authorities are encouraged to bid for a portion of at least £2 million of central government support for a wide range of projects to improve the air we breathe.

Applicants in previous years have been awarded funding to install electric vehicle charging points, improve cycling infrastructure and develop local online air quality resources.

These projects have contributed to the significant improvement in air quality in the UK in recent decades. Between 2010 and 2017, we have achieved reductions in primary emissions of harmful fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and nitrogen oxides by 10% and 29% respectively, and levels of nitrogen dioxide at the roadside are now at their lowest levels since records began.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

We know the impact air pollution has on public health, which is why we are continuing to provide funding to local authorities to help them to take action to improve air quality for the benefit of schools, businesses and residents. This is part of the much wider strategy to tackle air quality.

Local authorities are in the best position to address the issues they face around their roads, and we are looking forward to receiving ideas for innovative schemes to reduce emissions and encourage cleaner, more active transport.

Minister for the Future of Transport George Freeman said:

We know we need to step up the pace and clean up our air for everyone – from children on their way to school, to commuters travelling to work, and communities around the country.

This vital funding will help councils to take forward exciting new technologies, improving air quality and making our communities cleaner, more vibrant places to live.

Applications for the grant for 2019-20 are open from 4 October to 7 November 2019.

The Air Quality Grant forms part of the wider UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations, which includes a £3.5 billion investment into air quality and cleaner transport. The plan is supporting the uptake of low emissions vehicles, getting more people to cycle and walk, and encouraging cleaner public transport.

As a result of this plan, and alongside the Air Quality Grant, the government is working with 61 local authorities – and providing £495 million in funding – to reduce nitrogen dioxide concentrations through local plans that are effective, fair, good value, and will deliver required improvements in the shortest time possible.

In addition to this plan, last year we also launched the Clean Air Strategy, the most ambitious air quality strategy in a generation which aims to halve the harm to human health from air pollution by 2030, and has been praised by the World Health Organisation as “an example for the rest of the world to follow”.