

SAFETY CHECK LIST FOR MORECAMBE BAY

ADVICE FROM NORTH WEST COASTGUARD

(contact on 0151-931-3341 or in an emergency, by calling 999)

The golden rules are summarised as follows:

- Always tell someone exactly where you are going and what time you will be back
- Always know the weather forecast and tide times
- Be aware of how quickly the tide comes in and
- Have several types of communication

ADVICE FOR ANGLERS

The unusual nature of the Morecambe Bay tides is for longer slower ebb and a quicker and faster flood.

Always check the prevailing and forecast weather. Not only strong winds and seas, but also squally, foggy or misty conditions.

Tides and weather conditions can be obtained 24 hours a day on 0151 931 3341.

Local knowledge is imperative. The area has sand and mud banks, channels and gulleys, some being quicksand/mud which is in a constant state of flux.

Once on the sands, people must know how to get off.

Appropriate clothing must always be worn, including footwear, bearing in mind the terrain.

Let a relative, friend or even the Coastguard know where you are going and what time you will be back.

It is better for the emergency services to know sooner rather than later.

A form of communication, i.e. a mobile phone, is always useful but do not completely rely on one. A whistle or some flares can be a life-saver.

PREVENT BEING LOST IN FOG.

Prior to leaving check local weather forecast and times.

Tell someone where you are going and what time you will return.

Depending on the time of year, take suitable clothing, warm drink, snack etc.

Carry a compass/Global Positioning Satellite equipment and map of local area.

Before going onto the shore, check for signs warning of local dangers.
Keep an eye on the weather and, if you think the visibility is reducing, head back.

If you are in a group always remain close together.

If you have any doubt about any of the above-DON'T GO!!!!

Remember in fog you become totally disorientated, so without a compass you could become lost and it is impossible to determine from what direction any noise is coming from.

PREVENT BEING CUT OFF BY THE TIDE.

Check forecast and tide times and tell someone where you are going and what time you will be back.

Be aware channels or gullies fill very quickly.

Be aware there are quicksand's and these change daily.

Have a reliable means of attracting attention.

If you do become trapped by the tide never attempt to swim deep gullies.

Always keep an eye on children, do not let them wander far out.

If local people give you advice, heed what they say.

Remember that out on the sands it is invariably colder than it is on shore.

PREVENT BECOMING STUCK IN THE MUD.

Check time of day when you set out – have you allowed enough time to complete what is a lengthy walk.

Check the local weather forecast as often a fine sunny morning can deteriorate into a cold wet afternoon.

Are you wearing suitable clothing bearing in mind the weather forecast?

Carry a map and compass and know how to use them.

Carry a whistle in case you get into trouble and need to indicate your position.

Specialist guidance should be considered when crossing estuaries such as Queen's Guide to the Kent Sands, Cedric Robinson, who runs regular cross-bay walks.

BOAT AGROUND.

Should you become grounded in a small leisure vessel the first thing to do is to inform the coastguard.

Before setting out, obtain a weather forecast the night before and again an update before you set off. This can be obtained by various means, e.g. Ceefax, calling the coastguard direct or local radio.

Know your tides, this is essential in Morecambe Bay they are quite peculiar and individual.

Make sure that you have safety equipment with you appropriate clothing, lifejackets, means of alerting people, flares, radio, mobile phone for instance. Plus food and drink.

Make sure that you have told somebody of your intentions and they know whom to call to obtain assistance.

Join the coastguard small boat safety scheme.

Do not leave the vessel unless you are extremely familiar with the area as there are extensive patches of shifting quicksand within the Bay.