



Maritime & Coastguard Agency

Bay 2/03
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton
SO15 1EG

Tel: +44 (0)20 3817 2064
Email: [REDACTED]@mcga.gov.uk

Mr Andrew J Cox
Acting Senior Coroner for Cornwall and Isles of Scilly
The New Lodge
Newquay Road
Penmount
Truro
TR4 9AA

Your ref: 13029
Our ref: CE 17/2020

2 October 2020

By email only: cornwallcoroner@cornwall.gov.uk

Dear Mr Cox

Thank you for your letter of 7 August to Brian Johnson enclosing the Regulation 28 Preventing Future Deaths report for Jan Klempar who tragically lost his life whilst swimming in the sea at Porthcurno Cornwall in June this year.

I refer to my letter of 2 September re (Gillian Davey and Michael Pender) that explained that the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has an interest in maritime safety generally, because we coordinate and respond to search and rescue missions. Therefore, we want to see fewer accidents and less demand on the emergency services.

The provision of lifeguards on beaches is not the responsibility of the MCA as we do not have any statutory or specific responsibilities for beach safety; RNLI are the main provider of beach lifeguards on the coast. Beach Lifeguard Units are classified by the HM Coastguard as additional facilities that provide a service for the local council or landowner. We can ask them to assist with the response to an incident, we cannot task them as we would for a RNLI lifeboat (lifeboats are a declared facility). In fact, lifeguards often find themselves in a position to inform the Coastguard operations centres of an incident, where additional assistance is required.

This year we have been working closely with our RNLI partners on a joint publicity campaign to encourage the public to take personal responsibility, discouraging people from using inflatables and to dial 999 and call the Coastguard in an emergency. Also reminding the public that beach lifeguards can't be everywhere this summer, please see HM Coastguard blogspot¹ (posts of 15 & 20 May). RNLI colleagues will be able to provide a more detailed answer about this year's approach taken to lifeguarding services.

¹ <http://hmcoastguard.blogspot.com/>



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As set out in my letter of 2 October in response to your matters of concern for Mr A J Williamson (deceased):

HM Coastguard have been working closely since the start of the pandemic with Surf Life Saving GB (SLSGB) who run a programme of Beach Safety services that range from the full lifeguarding provision to providing the public with advice about how to keep safe, by raising awareness of the risks. The SLSGB volunteers are providing a service in some areas in the evenings after RNLI/other lifeguards have left for the day as an additional facility for the Coastguard (RNLI lifeguards normally work from 10am to 6pm and only at certain times of the year).

To help provide extra surveillance as a Category 1 responder throughout the busy summer season, we have been deploying more HM Coastguard vehicle patrols to high risk areas to keep a look out for any incidents at the coast enabling a swift response to search and rescue if required.

Also working with the National Water Safety Forum, (HMCG is a member) guidance was produced providing information² for beach and landowners to help maintain the safety of the public and staff on beaches during COVID-19.

Information about beaches, the facilities available and safety measures are the responsibility of the landowners, the majority of which are local councils and the National Trust. Details about the facilities available and safety measures in place can be found on most beach owners' websites.

The MCA fully supports your aim to prevent future deaths from drowning on the beaches in Cornwall. We want the public to enjoy them safely by taking personal responsibility by having an awareness of the risks.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

**Assistant Director
Her Majesty's Coastguard Policy & Standards**

² <https://nationalwatersafety.org.uk/advice-and-information/covid-19/>