



The sight of an RNLI vessel as it hove into view is often one of immense relief for anyone with the misfortune to get into trouble at sea. Much as the gratitude expressed on such occasions is appreciated the best option for all concerned is to avoid the need for the callout in the first instance and some simple checks can avoid most problems.

The RNLI Sea Check offers a free Safety Check of your boat and can be requested online at <http://www.rnliseasafety.org.uk/leisure/seacheck> .

The check will be conducted by an RNLI volunteer, who may well be an experienced diver, who will also be able to provide additional safety advice and suggestions for any additional improvements that can be made to the vessel or its operation.

Rick Raeburn, RNLI Leisure Boat Safety Manager

The time has at last come for that first 'real' dive of the year. The personal diving mothballs have been aired with dives in that wonderful, much loved, quarry and perhaps even the odd shore dive to ease back into things but the first boat dive of the year somehow seems more of the real thing.

Taking the club, or privately owned, RIB out of it's winter storage requires similar thought and preparation to that personal health check and preparation we give ourselves and there are some simple steps you can take to ensure that first trip is a relaxed and enjoyable success.

1. Boat Fitness

- As with personal equipment, winter is the ideal time to get the boat and engine properly serviced. Ensure it is done by a reputable dealer and service agent.
- Consider having the boat independently checked using the RNLI SEA CHECK
- Check and service all electronics as well
- Check out the boat on short trips before committing to more adventurous activities

2. Coxswain preparation

- Before loading the boat for the first trip of the season check the boat and engine to ensure that everything functions properly
- Check the Weather Forecast and make sure you have a Passage Plan on board
- Use a Safety Checklist
- Brief the crew
- Notify Coastguard

3. Crew Preparation

- Make sure all crew members are fully briefed on the trip
- Ensure all are aware of emergency actions

Much of the information and Guidance required for the 'Safe Operation of Member Club Boats' is contained within the publication of the same name from the Combined Diving Associations and can be downloaded from the BSAC Website at <http://www.bsac.org/techserv/diveboat1.htm>

A key element of this document is reference to the SOLAS V regulations and the requirement to have a current weather forecast and passage plan on board.

Think SAFE – Dive SAFE

Jim Watson

BSAC Safety and Development manager