



Lifeguards of California

California has wide sandy beaches, 480 km of ocean coastline and year-round sunshine. It also has dangerous rip tides – powerful currents that can pull swimmers out to sea – and a surfing culture that makes this area the natural home of lifeguarding.

Lifeguards in California must be highly trained men and women, who have to be skilled¹ in ocean swimming, first aid and life saving techniques. Their job is physically and mentally demanding. They have to spend long hours alone in a lifeguard tower maintaining their concentration on the ocean area they cover. They must perform ocean rescues and take action in major emergency incidents. Some lifeguards make up to 50 rescues a day in summer and last year about 12,000 rescues were carried out in California.

BEACH EMERGENCY

There are many dangers at the seaside so it is important that people should swim at beaches where there are lifeguards.



SHOREBREAKS when waves break directly onto the shore – can be unpredictable and dangerous. Swimmers should ask a lifeguard about the wave conditions before going into the sea.



LIGHTNING In the USA over 60 people are killed each year by lightning. 'When thunder roars², go indoors.' You shouldn't go near the beach when there's a storm.



SHARK ATTACKS are rare but they usually occur near the shore because sharks sometimes become trapped by low tide³. You shouldn't swim in the dark or at twilight⁴ as this is when sharks are more active. You mustn't go in the water if you have a cut – sharks can smell blood. You should stay in groups. A shark will attack if it sees a solitary swimmer. If you swim with jewellery, it could look like fish scales, so it's better not to wear any.



JELLYFISH You must keep an eye out for jellyfish⁵. Of the 2,000 species only 70 harm or kill people, but they can give you a painful sting⁶.

1 Leggi il testo e rispondi alle domande.

- 1 What is a rip tide?
- 2 What skills does a lifeguard in California have?
- 3 How many rescues were carried out in California last year?
- 4 What are shorebreaks?
- 5 Why shouldn't you go near the beach when there's a storm?
- 6 Why mustn't you go into the sea with a cut?
- 7 What must you keep an eye out for in the sea?
- 8 Why did the lifeguard wash the sting with vinegar?

TRAVEL DICTIONARY

2 Abbina i vocaboli (1-6) tratti dal testo alle definizioni (a-f).

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> first-aid | a emergency treatment |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> wound | b physically injure |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> rescue | c the act of saving someone from danger |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> advice | d to tell someone about dangerous situation |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> to warn | e a injury to the body |
| 6 <input type="checkbox"/> harm | f an opinion or recommendation |

