
Regional Coastguard Crews Boost Skills With UK's Royal National Lifeboat Institution

Release Date: 27 January, 2025



Rescuers from the Virgin Islands Search and Rescue (VISAR) were joined by maritime protection crews from Anguilla, Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat and Turks and Caicos Islands for a two-week training programme, delivered in partnership with HM Coastguard and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), and facilitated by RNLI trainers.

The programme, designed to 'train the trainers', developed attendees' search-and-rescue capabilities so that participants can redistribute the information to colleagues in their respective territories. The course, which took place on Tortola from 13 – 24 January, included theory, tabletop and practical elements.

The RNLI is a British non-governmental organisation with over 200 years of experience in saving lives at sea.

The Governor of the Virgin Islands, Mr. Daniel Pruce, attended the training course on Friday, 17th January, to thank the RNLI and observe course participants as they undertook a simulated search and rescue operation.

Commenting on the training session, the Governor said, "This type of training is vital to ensuring our crews are trained and up to date with international industry standards for search and rescue so they can provide the best service possible to the territories. Having observed a search and rescue exercise out in VI waters, I know we are all in safe hands. Many thanks to the RNLI and UK Coastguard for conducting this important training course for our dedicated search and rescue professionals."

David Whiddon, Senior International Programmes Manager at the RNLI, said: "We are proud to work closely with the HM Coastguard across the UK and we've built on this partnership to support organisations across the overseas territories. The RNLI's international work focuses on sharing our knowledge and lifesaving expertise to help build organisations capacity to save even more lives from drowning, which sadly takes 300,000 lives a year around the world."

Mr. Whiddon continued, "We also continue to learn from those we work with to improve and bring back learning on how we can save even more lives at sea in the UK and Ireland. Search and Rescue organisations around the world face similar

challenges and by working together and sharing knowledge to develop common solutions we can continue to save even more lives around the world. I would like to say thank you to VISAR and the RVIPF Marine Unit for hosting the event and all the participants dedication and commitment. We look forward to continuing to collaborate further in the future”.

Phil Aspinall MBE, Operations Manager of VISAR, said: “It has been our pleasure to co-host this initiative, now in its third year. I was privileged to be one of the delegates at the last one in Bermuda in November 2023 and the biggest take away for me was that the challenges we all face in this industry are similar in all of the jurisdictions, and yet the solutions have evolved slightly differently, quite often as a result of equipment and personnel availability. So, to have the RNLI’s 200 plus years of experience to guide and steer all of us is an incredible and valuable opportunity that we truly appreciate and are grateful for”.

Gallery

