



Ministerial Statement
by
The Hon. Jache Adams JP, MP
Minister of Public Works and Environment

Protecting Our Shores: Enhancing Lifeguard Coverage for the Safety of All

Friday, March 21st, 2025

Mr. Speaker,

As we usher in a new administration, I rise today to address a matter that is both urgent and deeply important to the safety and well-being of our community — the lifeguard coverage at our beaches. Over the past two years, tragic incidents have brought heightened attention to the critical role lifeguards play in ensuring the safety of those who enjoy our shores. These events served as a stark reminder of the importance of maintaining a strong, well-equipped, and properly staffed lifeguard service.

With tourism returning strongly and cruise ships extending their season, the demand for lifeguard services is growing. While the Department of Parks remains committed to meeting this demand, the challenges we face in staffing our beaches with qualified lifeguards have never been more apparent.

It is important to note that this is not just an issue of employment; it is an issue of public safety, and it requires our collective attention and action.

Mr. Speaker, currently our lifeguard service consists of one full time lifeguard, who serves as the Section Superintendent, and two categories of seasonal staff that work between April 1 and November 30.

The key point here, **Mr. Speaker,** is that almost all of our lifeguards are seasonal thereby leaving our beaches underserviced during the off-season. Coupled with this, since 2009, the Department of Parks has noticed a decline in lifeguard applications.

It should also be noted, that this decline in applications is despite the Government increasing its budget to hire more lifeguards, demonstrating the issues we face are not merely financial; we must reevaluate how we attract and retain personnel for these vital roles.

Mr. Speaker, while lifeguards must pass a rigorous 9-day initial training course which is unpaid, monthly physical assessments, and an annual 24-hour training course, starting lifeguards are among the lowest paid workers within the Department of Parks.

Given the increased demands on these first responders, we must reflect as a society and as a Government on how we value those in these critical roles.

So **Mr. Speaker**, what is the government doing to address these challenges?

I am pleased to report that the Department of Parks has initiated an internal assessment of its current organizational structure in consultation with the Department of Employee and Organizational Development. Part of this assessment includes reviewing the lifeguard section, updating job descriptions, recommending new pay scales, and exploring how we can transition seasonal positions into full-time roles.

Additionally **Mr. Speaker**, to assist with our effort to improve our lifeguard service, the Government has engaged the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), an international charity with extensive lifeguard experience, providing lifeguard coverage to nearly 240 beaches across the UK and overseas territories. They have assessed Bermuda's lifeguard service and will make recommendations on how to improve our system.

Mr. Speaker, while restructuring will take time, we are also taking immediate action. In February of this year, the RNLI team assessed six of our busiest beaches, namely Horseshoe Bay, Clearwater & Turtle Bay (counted as one), John Smith's Bay, Admiralty House, Warwick Long Bay, and Shelly Bay. The assessment will allow the Department to better understand potential risks, map out hazards, optimize equipment locations and operational areas for emergency responses.

Outside of assessing Bermuda's lifeguard services, and our busiest beaches RNLI also consulted with key stakeholders, including the Department of Parks lifeguard staff, the BTA, the Ministry of Transport, and the Bermuda Hotel Association.

As we await the fulsome report from RNLI, **Mr. Speaker**, the Department of Parks continues to advertise for the seasonal lifeguard positions, and has already received over 20 applications, with hopefully more expected.

However, **Mr. Speaker**, as our tourism season extends year-round, we cannot continue to rely solely on a seasonal workforce. To ensure adequate coverage during the full tourism season, the Government is now advertising for eight (8) full-time consultant lifeguard positions for a one to two-year period, allowing for sufficient time for the MCS restructuring process to conclude.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to our normal seasonal staff, these eight (8) full-time lifeguards will suffice to cover high-traffic beaches throughout the year and during off-peak events such as the Bermuda Triathlon and various holiday gatherings on Elbow Beach, without overburdening the staff.

Applications can be submitted online at www.gov.bm/online-services/lifeguardservice, or physical applications can be collected at the Department of Parks Headquarters in the Global House Building in Hamilton. The deadline for applications is April 4th, 2025.

Mr. Speaker, I must strongly emphasize that we are actively encouraging Bermudians with lifeguard experience to apply for these full-time consultant positions as we work to ensure adequate coverage throughout our tourism season. However, in light of the aforementioned recent tragedies, our priority is to save lives. If we do not receive sufficient applications from Bermudians, we will be compelled to seek qualified individuals from abroad to ensure the safety of all.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the team within the Ministry of Public Works and Environment for their tireless work on this longstanding issue. I would also like to express my gratitude to our RNLI partners, for their invaluable assistance in ensuring Bermuda is positioned to have the lifeguard coverage it needs. We look forward to building a long-lasting partnership with the RNLI.

Finally, **Mr. Speaker,** I must acknowledge Mr. Nathan Trott, our sole full-time lifeguard and Service Superintendent. Since 2008, Nathan has been the backbone of the Bermuda Lifeguard Service, managing all aspects of the service from recruitment to training, equipment maintenance, scheduling, and lifeguarding. He has done this without the support of an administrative team and has not had a substantive vacation since taking on this role. I am sure all members of this Honourable House will join me in expressing our sincere thanks to Nathan Trott and agree with me that it is high time we provide Nathan with the support he so greatly deserves.

In conclusion, **Mr. Speaker,** the safety of our community and the well-being of those who enjoy Bermuda's beautiful beaches must remain a top priority for this Government. As we continue to face challenges in staffing our lifeguard service, it is crucial that we take both immediate and long-term actions to address these issues. Through increased funding, restructuring efforts, and collaboration with expert organizations like the RNLI, we are committed to strengthening our lifeguard service and ensuring that our beaches remain safe for residents and visitors alike.

Mr. Speaker, esteemed colleagues, and to the listening public, if you or someone you know is interested in joining our lifeguard service to help protect our shores, we encourage you to reach out to directly to Mr. Nathan Trott at njtrott@gov.bm.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker.**