



ISLA Project Dominican Republic: Fall Lifeguard Training 2012

November 2012: The International Surf Lifesaving Association (ISLA) sent a team of professional lifeguards to the Dominican Republic (DR) as part of an initiative to minimize deaths and injuries caused by drowning. As part of the three stage initiative, ISLA conducted two Basic Open Water Lifeguard Training Courses in the DR.



The three stage initiative in the DR is a collaboration between ISLA and the Laurel Eastman Kite School in Cabarete, Diego Geribaldi and Viva Wyndham Tangerine in Cabarete, Lee Alter and the International Law Enforcement Association in Cabarete, and the La Romana-Bayahibe Hotel Association.



The ISLA lifeguards teamed up with three Dominican lifeguards from previous ISLA projects to teach the courses. The ISLA instructor staff was comprised of Lifeguards Henry Reyes (Huntington City Beach), Dean Fernandez (Santa Cruz State Beach), Taylor McGowan (Los Angeles City Beach- Cabrillo), Joe Reed (Crystal Cove State Park), Jeff Hart (Los Angeles Country), William Koon (Huntington State Beach), Joe Perez (ISLA Dominican Ambassador), Marcel Mera (ISLA Lifeguard), and Pedro Polanco (ISLA and Viva Wyndham Lifeguard).

The first lifeguard training course took place in Cabarete, Puerto Plata on the North Coast, and the second course took place in La Romana-Bayahibe on the South East Coast. The two courses included a total of forty-seven participants from local surf and kite schools, various Hotels and Resorts, the Dominican Civil Defense, the Dominican Red Cross, employees from the La Romana-Bayahibe Hotel Association and other local businesses.

The courses included classroom and practical instruction on Basic Oceanography and Marine Hazards, Lifeguard Systems and Operation, Rescue Recognition and Realization, Basic Beach-Related First Aid, and Communication/Job Skills. In addition, the course participants were set to perform physical events that tested their running and ocean swimming capability.





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Thirty-six of the participants passed the final mock rescue and written exams and received the ISLA Basic Open Water Lifeguard Certificate. The ISLA Certificate is accepted by the Dominican Civil Defense and is required for all lifeguards in the DR.

The next step for ISLA and the DR is to establish permanent lifeguard agencies and to empower the public and private sectors to take measures to prevent drowning in order to create a safer aquatic environment for Dominicans and tourists. The next project will take place during Easter 2013. The focus will be to take steps to transfer lifeguard responsibilities to local rescue agencies and businesses in Cabarete and to add lifeguard coverage to beaches without any rescue personnel.

Learn more about previous projects and current projects in the [Dominican Republic](#).

View [photos](#) from this trip in the Dominican Republic.

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