



## IRISH WATER SAFETY AUGUST WATER SAFETY PRESS RELEASE

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### **80% of drownings occur close to home. Be safe this bank holiday weekend.**

Irish Water Safety is appealing to the public to swim at Lifeguarded waterways and to stay within your depth when swimming at any other bathing areas. Drownings often happen quickly and silently with 80% of drownings occurring close to the victim's home. The range of aquatic activities is extremely varied yet what is tragically constant each year is the gender most at risk - males - tragically reflected in the fact that of the 122 drownings last year, 91 were male.

Forty-five of the 66 accidental drownings occurred in the 20-59 year age group clearly demonstrating that it is not just children that are at risk. That said 30 children aged 14 and under drowned in the last ten years.

August is the most popular month for outdoor swimming which can be enjoyed safely by heeding the following swimming safety tips:

#### **Top Tips for Safe Swimming in August:**

1. Swim at lifeguarded waterways - listed at [www.iws.ie](http://www.iws.ie).
2. Swim with others in recognized, traditional, safe bathing areas.
3. Swim within your depth, parallel and close to shore and stay within your depth.
4. Never use inflatable toys in open water or swim out after anything drifting.
5. Pay attention to signs on the beach.
6. Never swim in the dark or late at night.
7. Avoid staying in the water too long.
8. Wait a while before swimming if you're hot or tired.
9. Learn to use equipment before trying it out.
10. Learn resuscitation skills.
11. Supervise children at all times near water.

#### **Water-safety advice that will save life:**

Drownings will decline if the following rules, however familiar they seem, are never taken for granted:

- **Wear a Lifejacket.** Find out what device suits your needs at <http://www.iws.ie/guides-page24421.html> .
- **Avoid unsupervised areas.** Whenever possible, swim in an area that has a lifeguard. Irish Water Safety has details of all lifeguarded waterways nationwide listed at <http://www.iws.ie/bathing-areas-page.html> .
- **Learn swimming and lifesaving.** Irish Water Safety has swimming and lifesaving classes for children and adults. Log on to find one near you at <http://www.iws.ie/courses--jobs-page.html#Courses> .
- **Watch for changing weather.** Be prepared to get out of the water and take cover if the skies look threatening.
- **Avoid alcohol.** Water sports and alcohol don't mix. Tragically, alcohol is a factor in one third of adult deaths from drowning. Alcohol impairs judgment, balance and coordination — all essential for swimming and boating and avoiding hazards in the water.
- **Watch children constantly.** Children are irresistibly attracted to water. Take the time to protect your children from the dangers of water. Teach them in advance at [www.aquaattack.ie](http://www.aquaattack.ie).
- **In Marine Emergencies, call 112 and ask for the coastguard.**

#### **Enquiries:**

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