



PRESS RELEASE

18th June 2018

IN SECONDS, WATER CAN STEAL A LIFE

This is National Water Safety Awareness Week 2018 (June 18 – 24)

During the recent spell of good weather, thousands enjoyed our beaches and inland waterways yet it was also a time of tragic loss as ten people drowned accidentally. Such drownings can happen quickly, silently and in seconds but there are key steps to staying safe this summer. As part of National Water Safety Awareness Week (June 18 – 24), Irish Water Safety is appealing to the public to use our outdoor waterways safely.

1. Swim at Designated Bathing Areas where lifeguards are on duty during the bathing season which runs from the 1st of June to the 15th September <http://www.iws.ie/bathing-areas-page.html>
2. If there is no Designated Bathing Area near you then swim in areas that are known locally as safe and where there are ringbuoys present for safe rescue.
3. Swim within your depth and stay within your depth.
4. Supervise children closely and do not use inflatable toys in open water. Teach these lessons: <http://www.iws.ie/education/paws.2925.html>
5. Make sure that the water's edge is shallow shelving so that you can safely enter and exit.
6. Wear a wet suit if you are not used to the cold water.
7. Alcohol is a factor in one third of drownings. Do not mix it with water activities. See <http://www.askaboutalcohol.ie/>
8. Always wear a lifejacket when on or near water. See <http://www.iws.ie/boating/personal-flotation-devices.327.html>

If you see someone in difficulty, these simple steps may save a life:

- A. **Shout** to the casualty and encourage them to shore. This may orientate them just enough.
- B. **Reach** out with a long object such a branch or a piece of clothing but do not enter the water yourself.
- C. **Throw** a ringbuoy or any floating object and call 112 for the coast guard.

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