

Five people drown every fortnight

Don't let safety take a holiday this weekend.
Stay safe, smart and sober near water

Water-related tragedies can occur quickly and silently and with an average of 135 drownings every year in Ireland, Irish Water Safety is drawing attention to the dangers that will put people's lives at risk this October bank holiday weekend.

People are typically more at risk during holiday weekends as they can become complacent and risk putting themselves and their families in dangerous situations. Last year, drowning fatalities amongst children aged 0-14 years increased substantially - from one death in 2013 to six in 2014. This marks the highest annual drowning figure within this age group since 2008 when six children also drowned. In total, 22 children aged 0-14 years have drowned during the period of 2007-2014, and in the last five years, there have been 12 child drowning fatalities.

People have a responsibility to themselves and family to stay safe around water by knowing the dangers particularly with stronger tidal streams over the Bank Holiday weekend due to the full moon on Tuesday 27th October.

- Lower tides typically entice beach walkers further from shore, risking stranding from stronger incoming tidal flows. Shore walkers should stay away from the edge and beach walkers should always carry a mobile phone.
- Children are naturally curious about water and constant uninterrupted supervision is the safest way to avoid tragedy. Parents and guardians should check if their local school has yet introduced Irish Water Safety's PAWS programme – Primary Aquatics Water Safety, which teaches children all about staying safe around water: www.iws.ie.
- Always wear a Lifejacket when on or near water and ensure that it has a correctly fitted crotch strap.
- Anglers should be extremely vigilant when fishing from the shoreline of Atlantic swells.
- Ensure that you are fully trained and competent for your aquatic activity: www.safetyzone.ie.
- On average, a third of drowning victims had consumed alcohol.
- In emergency situations, never hesitate to call 112 and ask for the Coast Guard.

Irish Water Safety encourages everyone to take swimming, lifesaving, survival and rescue classes. For further information click on www.iws.ie. Report missing Ringbuoys at www.ringbuoys.ie

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