

## Swim at Lifeguarded waterways this weekend

As we approach the busiest Bank Holiday of the year, Water Safety Ireland is appealing for people to swim at lifeguarded waterways this weekend where possible - listed at <http://www.iws.ie/bathing-areas/map.372.html>, as the risk of drownings is higher due to a new moon on Thursday which will bring spring tides to our coastline. Elsewhere, swim within your depth and stay within your depth. Thankfully, the number of people drowning is decreasing. In 2018, 103 drowned, the lowest since 1939, 80 years ago. To ensure that we continue this downward trend in drownings we need the public to take personal responsibility when on or near water and have a healthy attitude towards it and ensure our behaviour is safe around our aquatic environments. The Sea water temperature is between 15° and 18° Celsius whilst Freshwater is between 19° and 20° so water temperature is approaching its highest of the bathing season and we encourage the public to get in and enjoy a swim, good for both physical and mental health.

The new moon will cause strong rip currents on all surfing beaches or those with a fairly steep gradient. These can quickly take a person away from shore which is helpful to the surfer but can cause tragedy to those who don't understand them. Lifeguards are trained to spot these currents and keep people away from danger. Should you find yourself in one, then simply swim parallel to the shore until you leave it, then swim back ashore, further details at <http://www.iws.ie/beach/rip-current-safety.328.html>

Lifeguards administered first aid over four thousand times last year. They located three hundred lost children and rescued more than three hundred people nationwide.

Stranding will also be a risk for many walkers and mussel pickers as lower tides will expose even greater areas of the coastline. They should always carry a mobile phone to call 112 in an emergency and ask for the Coast Guard.

Parents should provide constant uninterrupted supervision as thirty children aged fourteen and under drowned in ten years. Never use inflatable toys in open water

Those going afloat on more adventurous voyages should always wear a lifejacket and carry a portable Marine VHF and/or a personal locator beacon. Details on lifejackets at <http://www.iws.ie/boating/personal-flotation-devices.327.html>

If you are going to take on a new aquatic activity then please ensure that you have the requisite training from the relevant National Governing Body – details at <http://www.safetyzone.ie>

Ends.

### Media Enquiries to:

Water Safety Ireland, The Long Walk, Galway

LoCall 1890-420.202 [www.iws.ie](http://www.iws.ie); Tel: 091-564400 Fax: 091-564700

Mobiles: John Leech: 087-6789600; Roger Sweeney 087-6789601