

Swim at Lifeguarded waterways this weekend

Water Safety Ireland is appealing for people to swim at lifeguarded waterways this weekend where possible, as the risk of drownings is higher due to a new moon and cool waters. Elsewhere, swim within your depth and stay within your depth.

The new moon will cause strong rip currents that can quickly take a person away from shore. Survival time in such scenarios is greatly reduced due to the cooler water temperatures that have not yet warmed up sufficiently for extended swims. Lifeguards are trained to spot these currents and keep people away from danger.

The Lifeguard season begins this weekend and there are many reasons to swim under their supervision. 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 as lower tides will expose even greater areas of the coastline. Walkers should always carry a mobile phone to call 112 in an emergency.

Parents should provide constant uninterrupted supervision as thirty children aged fourteen and under drowned in ten years.

Those going afloat should always wear a lifejacket and carry a portable Marine VHF and/or a personal locator beacon.

If you have not used your lifejacket or buoyancy aid since last year then you will need to carry out the following checks.

- Ensure CO2 Cartridges have not been punctured and are firmly secured
- Ensure all zips, buckles, fasteners and webbing straps are functioning correctly
- Check that fitted lights are operating correctly
- Check that the valve or lifejacket is not leaking by inflating the lifejacket overnight or immersing it in water checking for air bubbles
- Always use your crotch strap when fitting your lifejacket
- Detailed information on PFD's at <http://www.iws.ie/boating/personal-flotation-devices.327.html>
- Discard any faulty lifejackets by destroying them

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