



PRESS RELEASE

WATER SAFETY IRELAND

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Warm weather increases drowning risks Know How To Stay Safe This Weekend

As the risk of drowning increases around warm weather bank holiday weekends, Water Safety Ireland is appealing to the public to adhere to the following guidance during this phase of Government's Roadmap for Reopening Society.

1. If you really must visit a waterway, only do so within your 5km limit. This may result in you visiting waterways that are unfamiliar to you, therefore encourage friends and family to stay away from edges.
2. If you plan on swimming, the waterway within your 5km limit may not be lifeguarded. Ensure that it is a designated bathing area that is known locally to be traditionally safe and that it has ringbuoys present. Practice social distancing when in, on or near the water.
3. If you do have a Lifeguarded waterway nearby, swim between the red and yellow flags so that you are within the Lifeguard's patrol zone. A red flag means that a Lifeguard has decided that it is unsafe to swim. If there is no flag, it means that there is no lifeguard on duty.
4. Lifeguards are operating on weekends in June and fulltime in July and August. There is a list of lifeguarded waterways on www.watersafety.ie but check with your local authority in case of changes to beach opening times.
5. Warm air temperature does not mean that the water is warm. It is still too cold for extended swims and doing so places you at risk of hypothermia. Wear a wetsuit.
6. Swim with a friend or with family, in case emergency services need to be called.
7. Swim and Go – enjoy your swim but leave the area soon afterwards so that others may enjoy the water while complying with the need to social distance. If a beach is busy, wait until you can practise social distancing or take a walk or go to another safe beach nearby. Do not be tempted to swim in areas that you cannot confirm to be safe. There may be dangerous currents and hidden depths that may take you out of your comfort zone.
8. Do not overestimate your ability or underestimate the risks. The same dangers that were present before Covid-19 are still present so please swim within your depth and stay within your depth.
9. Supervise children closely.
10. Always wear a lifejacket when on or near water and when angling from shore. Ensure that it is properly maintained and has a correctly fitted crotch strap.
11. Those going afloat should carry a portable Marine VHF and/or a personal locator beacon and walkers should carry a mobile phone.
12. In an emergency call 112 and ask for the Coast Guard.

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