



PRESS RELEASE Water Safety Ireland

19th June 2020

Heightened Drowning Risk This New Moon Weekend

Water Safety Ireland is warning that the risk of drownings will be higher this weekend due to the higher tides that will be caused by a new moon on Sunday June 21st. It is appealing to the public to wear a lifejacket when angling from shore, to stay away from the water's edge when walking and to swim at lifeguarded waterways.

As the easing of Covid-19 related restrictions allows people to travel to waterways within their own county, Water Safety Ireland is pointing to the fact that the drowning risks that were there before Covid-19 remain a threat at all waterways, particularly in the days surrounding a new moon phase.

"An average of ten drownings occur in Ireland every month and eight out of ten drownings occur within a victim's own county, so although people will welcome the fact that they can now travel to waterways within their own county, it is important to reduce the risks by wearing a lifejacket when angling from shore, to stay away from the water's edge when walking the shoreline and to be aware of additional hazards when swimming during the days of a new moon", commented Roger Sweeney of Water Safety Ireland.

"It is particularly relevant this weekend because of a new moon on Sunday June 21st. A new moon makes the coastline more precarious due to a resulting spring tide. Sea swimmers should be mindful of rip currents, which are especially strong during a new moon. These currents can be difficult to spot and they can quickly weaken even the strongest swimmers and take them away from shore. Survival time is greatly reduced due to the cooler water temperatures that have not yet warmed up sufficiently for extended swims," said Sweeney. "Never swim against a rip current. Instead, swim parallel to shore to escape the narrow current and then swim back to shore at an angle. Your safest bet is to swim at a Lifeguarded waterway as they are trained to spot these currents."

"Stranding will also be a risk for many walkers as lower tides will expose even greater areas of the coastline. We urge parents to provide constant uninterrupted supervision of their children near water. Last year Lifeguards found and reunited 289 lost children with their loved ones, rescued 260 people from drowning and provided first aid more than 3,000 times nationwide."

"There is a public perception that the risk of drowning is primarily related to offshore activities, yet six out of ten drownings occur inland at rivers and lakes. This is National Water Safety Awareness Week. Visit www.watersafety.ie for advice that will protect you and your family from drowning."

If you see somebody in trouble in the water:

SHOUT – REACH – THROW

SHOUT to encourage and orientate; REACH with anything that prevents you from entering the water (clothing/stick); THROW a ringbuoy or any floating object.

Use VHF Ch 16 or Dial 112 (or 999) and ask for the Irish Coast Guard

Ends. Enquiries:

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