



PRESS RELEASE - WATER SAFETY IRELAND

28th July 2020

Appeal to swim at Lifeguarded waterways And social distance at bank holiday beaches

As we approach the busiest bank holiday of the year, Water Safety Ireland is appealing for people to swim at lifeguarded waterways and to adhere to Government and HSE guidelines, as there have been a number of reports of crowded beaches and people not adhering to social distancing.

All lifeguarded waterways are listed at <https://watersafety.ie/lifeguards>.

In 2019, 105 people drowned but to help reduce drownings, the public should take personal responsibility when on or near water, have a healthy respect for the dangers and ensure that all activities are safe and within the person's ability. Novice and beginners must always - **swim within your depth and stay within your depth**.

Water temperature is approaching its highest for the bathing season (sea water is between 14° and 16° Celsius and freshwater is between 16° and 18° Celsius so people should encourage their friends and family to join them for an open water swim, as it benefits both physical and mental health.

The need for personal responsibility is reflected in the fact that Lifeguards administered first aid to 3,284 people last season. They located 289 lost children and rescued 260 casualties from the water nationwide.

Beware of rip currents on all surfing beaches or those with a steep gradient. These can quickly take a person away from shore which is helpful to the surfer but can cause tragedy for those who do not understand such currents. 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 <https://watersafety.ie/recreation>

Stranding will also be a risk for many coastal walkers therefore a mobile phone should be carried 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 as they can quickly be swept out to sea by offshore winds and currents.

Alcohol should be avoided before or during any aquatic activity. Alcohol is a factor in an average of three of every ten drownings.

Those going afloat should always wear a lifejacket and carry a portable Marine VHF and/or a personal locator beacon. Details on lifejackets at <https://watersafety.ie/boating>
Ends.

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