



## PRESS RELEASE - WATER SAFETY IRELAND

22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020

### Bank Holiday Weekend Water Safety Warning - Remain Vigilant To The Risks Within Your 5km Exercise Regime

As people stay home apart from exercising within 5km, Water Safety Ireland is advising the public that to stay SAFE is to “Stay Away From the Edge” if exercising near water this October Bank Holiday and throughout the upcoming mid-term break for schools. Now that people cannot meet up apart from with one other household, the risk of not being rescued if you get into difficulty will increase because there may not be others around to see an accident unfold.

As people are urged to adhere to Government advice at [gov.ie/covid19](http://gov.ie/covid19), it is equally important that people adhere to water safety advice during periods of exercise within the Level 5 restrictions, and particularly if a walking regime includes the supervision of children.

WSI is reminding parents and guardians that thirty children died from drowning in ten years. Children are naturally curious about water and constant supervision is the safest way to avoid tragedy. Drownings can occur within the home environments to which we are restricted, where familiarity can breed complacency, making danger more difficult to spot. Streams, drains, ponds, water tanks, septic tanks, slurry pits and waterside fencing should all be properly secured.

- The risks are even greater at inland waterways. Although 40,000 people live less than 100 metres from the coast and some 2 million people live within 5km of the coast (40% of the population), the majority of drownings, some 62%, actually occur inland at our rivers and lakes. Stay Away From Edges of all inland waterways.
- Be aware of the changeable weather at this time of year. Reduced temperatures increase the risk of cold shock and hypothermia which makes swimming to safety difficult or impossible.
- Do not attempt to rescue pets from the water. Earlier this week, a gentleman had a lucky escape after falling from a cliff walk while trying to rescue his dog. In such instances, there may not be anyone around to call the Rescue Services as people comply with the need to stay at home.
- Always wear a Lifejacket when on or near water and ensure that it has a correctly fitted crotch strap. Surfers, kite boarders, divers, kayakers and sailors should wear suitably warm and waterproof clothing.
- Shore walkers should stay away from the edge and remain vigilant to the dangers of being stranded and to being carried away by dangerous swells.
- In emergency situations, call 112 early and ask for the Coast Guard. More advice at [www.watersafety.ie](http://www.watersafety.ie)

For Government advice on Covid19 visit: [www.gov.ie/covid19](http://www.gov.ie/covid19)

**Ends**

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