



JUNE BANK HOLIDAY PRESS RELEASE - WATER SAFETY IRELAND

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Let Lifeguards Be There For You Swim At Lifeguarded Waterways This June Bank Holiday

The public is advised to swim at lifeguarded waterways this June Bank Holiday Weekend and adhere to Covid-19 social distancing guidelines at busy bathing areas. Lifeguards will be on patrol at popular locations throughout the country for weekends in June and everyday throughout July and August. Water Safety Ireland is urging everyone to swim between the flags at lifeguarded waterways, and to swim within your depth and stay within your depth. Details of Lifeguard cover is available at <https://watersafety.ie/lifeguards/>.

Lifeguards play an important part in protecting people every summer. Last year, Lifeguards rescued 468 people at waterways nationwide, provided first aid to almost 3,500 people and located 251 lost children.

At this time of year, many people will take their first open water dip this weekend. The absence of swimming classes and swimming pools for over a year means that people will not have practised, therefore Lifeguarded waterways provide protection from danger.

Advice to ensure people reduce their risk of an accident:

1. Swim at Designated Bathing Areas where lifeguards are on duty during the bathing season which runs from June to the 15th of September.
2. If there is no Designated Bathing Area near you, then visit <https://watersafety.ie/open-water-swimming/> for comprehensive advice.
3. Swim at known traditional bathing areas where there are ringbuoys erected and that you can use if somebody gets into difficulty.
4. As you socially distance, avoid swimming in unfamiliar areas that are potentially unsafe.
5. Swim within your depth and stay within your depth.
6. Ask for local knowledge to determine local hazards and safest areas to swim.
7. Make sure that the edges are shallow shelving so that you can safely and easily enter and exit the water.
8. Beware of rip currents. They can be difficult to spot and take you away from the shore. If caught in one, never swim against the current. Swim parallel to the shore until you leave it, then swim back ashore.
9. Never swim in quarries or reservoirs.
10. Wear a wet suit and swim cap when swimming in cooler open water.
11. Alcohol is a factor in one third of drownings – never mix alcohol with water activities.
12. Parents and guardians should always supervise children near water.
13. Never use inflatable toys in open water as they can quickly be swept out of your depth by offshore winds and currents.

14. 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.
15. Always wear a correctly fitting lifejacket when boating or paddle boarding.
16. If you see somebody in trouble in the water: SHOUT – REACH – THROW
 - a. SHOUT to encourage and orientate them;
 - b. REACH with anything that prevents you from entering the water (clothing/stick);
 - c. THROW a ringbuoy or any floating object to them.

See Water Safety Ireland on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, and visit www.watersafety.ie for more information.

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