



PRESS RELEASE - WATER SAFETY IRELAND

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Hot weather increases drowning risk. UN World Drowning Prevention Day is Sunday 25 July

The United Nations has declared Sunday 25 July World Drowning Prevention Day. It is part of the first ever UN Resolution on drowning prevention, an initiative of Ireland and Bangladesh that aims to address a global killer that takes an average of 115 lives in Ireland every year*.

The current hot spell has increased that drowning risk. Water Safety Ireland is asking the public to mark World Drowning Prevention Day by making water safety part of your conversation with loved ones before you even leave home and practise the following guidelines to stay safe.

1. Swim within your depth and stay within your depth. Many people are swimming for the first time this year and have not had swimming classes for more than 15 months.
2. Swim at a Lifeguarded waterway, listed at www.watersafety.ie/lifeguards. Otherwise swim in areas that are known locally as safe and where there are ringbuoys present for rescues.
3. Make sure that the water's edge is shallow shelving so that you can safely enter and exit.
4. The air temperature is warm but open water is cooler – avoid extended stays in the water as your muscles will cool, making swimming more difficult.
5. Never use inflatable toys in open water as a gentle breeze can quickly bring a person away from shore.
6. Always supervise children closely and never leave them alone at garden paddling pools.
7. Wear a lifejacket when on or near water. See <https://watersafety.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Personal-Flotation-Device-Leaflet.pdf>
8. Alcohol is a factor in one third of drownings. Do not mix it with water activities.
9. If you see someone in difficulty, these simple steps may save a life:
 - A. Shout to the casualty and encourage them to shore. This may orientate them just enough.
 - B. Reach out with a long object such a branch or a piece of clothing but do not enter the water yourself.
 - C. Throw a ringbuoy or any floating object and call 112 for the coast guard.

Ireland averages ten drownings every month. As we approach World Drowning Prevention Day, please inform your family of this advice and get more at www.watersafety.ie. Anyone can drown, no one should.

*In the decade to 2020, drowning was responsible for 1,151 deaths in Ireland and over 2.5 million preventable deaths worldwide. It is a significant, preventable public health issue. View Resolution here: <https://undocs.org/A/RES/75/273>.

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