



## PRESS RELEASE

30 July 2021

### **Nine Drownings In Seven Days Stay Safe Appeal to all water users**

Nine people have drowned at waterways on the island of Ireland in the last seven days, six at inland waterways, leading Water Safety Ireland to make a national stay safe appeal to the public throughout the Bank Holiday weekend and the month of August.

People are advised to swim only at Lifeguarded waterways or in areas that are traditionally known to be safe and have ringbuoys available for rescues.

Water Safety Ireland's '**Better Safe, Than Sorry**' appeal:

1. As you social distance, avoid swimming in unfamiliar areas that are potentially unsafe. Swim at Designated Bathing Areas where lifeguards are on duty – full list available at [www.watersafety.ie/lifeguards/](http://www.watersafety.ie/lifeguards/)
2. If there is no Designated Bathing Area near you, then visit <https://watersafety.ie/open-water-swimming/> for comprehensive advice. Swim at known traditional bathing areas where there are ringbuoys erected that you can use for rescues. Ask for local knowledge to determine local hazards and safest areas to swim. Pay attention to any safety signage identifying hazards.
3. Swim within your depth and stay within your depth. Make sure that the edges are shallow shelving so that you can safely and easily enter and exit the water.
4. To escape a rip current, swim parallel to the shore and then swim back ashore. See [www.watersafety.ie/rip-currents/](http://www.watersafety.ie/rip-currents/)
5. Inflatable toys pose a real threat to life and should not be used at open water locations as the slightest breeze can take children away from shore, out of their depth. Parents and guardians need to be particularly careful to ensure that children are supervised at all times in, near or on water.
6. Never swim in quarries or reservoirs.
7. Alcohol is a factor in one third of drownings – never mix alcohol with water activities.
8. Always wear a correctly fitting lifejacket when boating and have a means of communication in a waterproof pouch.
9. Beware of stranding by incoming tides. Carry a charged phone at all times and in an emergency, call 112 and ask for the Coast Guard.
10. If you see somebody in trouble in the water: SHOUT – REACH – THROW
  - a. SHOUT to calm, 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.

#### **Know The Lifeguard Flags:**

No Lifeguard flag means that there is no Lifeguard on duty.

A red flag means that a Lifeguard is on duty but has deemed conditions to be too unsafe to swim.

The red and yellow flags mean a Lifeguard is on duty and the Lifeguard is patrolling between those flags.

Visit [www.watersafety.ie](http://www.watersafety.ie) for more information.

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