

Water Safety Ireland
Water Safety Guidance Note Number 1:
Management of Public Rescue Equipment (Ringbuoys) within the Local Authority

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Management of Public Rescue Equipment (Ringbuoys)

1. Equipment

- 1.1 The ringbuoy 18" (450mm) in diameter.
- 1.2 Weight of ringbuoy: a minimum 1kg Polyurethane or similar material.
- 1.3 Positive Buoyancy of a Ringbuoy: a minimum of 50 Newton's.
- 1.4 The ringbuoy shall be red/orange in colour.
- 1.5 A rope, should be attached to the ringbuoy, minimum of 15 meters and up to a maximum of 30 meters in length. At bridges in tidal estuaries the length of rope should be Air Draft of bridge at MLWS plus ten Meters where possible.
MLWS: Mean Low Water Spring.
- 1.6 The rope shall have a minimum of 0.5 tonne breaking strain, 8 plaid, 6mm coloured red and yellow polypropylene or similar material. This rope should be securely attached to the ringbuoy.
- 1.7. Ringbuoys can be mounted on a galvanised steel structure or bolted directly to walls or other similar structures. The bottom of the box should be no more than 1300mm from the ground.
- 1.8 The Ringbuoy should be erected in the yellow box with appropriate safety notifications (e.g. sticker) attached to the box.
- 1.9 The rope and ringbuoy should be available for emergency use.
- 1.10 The Ringbuoy should be positioned above the Mean High Water Spring line if it is a tidal waterway or above the Winter Flood line on a river or lake. This is to ensure safe access to it at all times. It should be located in a conspicuous position in close proximity to the waterway so as to allow easy access to it.
- 1.11 The WSDO will advise the relevant Local Authority Department on the procurement of public rescue equipment which complies with the standards, as set out by WSI

2. Frequency of inspection of Ringbuoys

- 2.1 Public Rescue Equipment located within lifeguarded zones should be checked daily by lifeguards when on

duty during the Bathing Season.
2.2 Public Rescue Equipment located in a non-lifeguarded known popular bathing location, with a seasonal daily average of 25 bathers present during the bathing season, should be checked on a fortnightly basis during the summer season (May – September) and checked monthly in wintertime.
2.3 Public Rescue Equipment located within cities, major towns, major harbours should be checked weekly during the year.
2.4 Public Rescue Equipment located in minor towns, villages and rural areas should be checked every two months.
2.5 It would be prudent that in the case of para 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 above, more/less frequent checks should be carried out in areas of recorded interference or vandalism / no interference or vandalism.
3. Inspection of Ringbuoys
3.1 Ringbuoys will be inspected for defects and damage and be available for emergency use.
4. Location of Ringbuoys
4.1 For various aquatic locations refer to Guidance notes 2,3,4,5 & 6 A local RA or ILSE RA is required to advise on ringbuoy locations. While waiting for RAs results, in consultation with the WDSO, ringbuoys can be placed temporarily at locations where they are safe, visible and accessible.
5. Record Keeping
5.1 A register of local authority public rescue equipment shall be maintained.
6. Annual Audit
6.1 An audit of the local authority public rescue equipment register and inspection records should be carried out once a year. Inspection records should be retained in accordance with the Local Authority Retention of Records policy.
Reference Guidance note 7:- Local Authority, in consultation with the WSDO, to ensure that their relevant departments have an annual programme in place regarding the ongoing inspection and maintenance of public rescue equipment and records of same are maintained (in accordance with WSI guidelines). WSDO shall ensure that an annual audit of the programme takes place. The Local Authority maintains the programme in accordance Water Safety Guidance note No.1.