

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

Status	Approved by WSI Council: 2 February 2022 Approved by CCMA: 17 February 2022
Approval Date	17 February 2022
Effective Date	1 June 2022

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 WSDO, 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.

7. Inspection and maintenance of the Public Rescue Equipment (Ringbuoys)

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 with Water Safety Guidance note No.1.

Water Safety Ireland
Water Safety Guidance Note Number 2
Management of Designated Bathing Area's (DBA)

Status	Approved by WSI Council: 2 February 2022 Approved by CCMA: 17 February 2022
Approval Date	17 February 2022
Effective Date	1 June 2022

Designated Bathing Area (DBA)

**A designated bathing area (DBA) is a bathing area as defined in the Bathing Waters Directive*

1. Risk Assessment of DBA's

- 1.1 DBA's to be risk assessed:
- At the request of the Local Authority, under advisement of the WSDO
 - At least once every five years
 - At least once every three years for Blue Flag beaches
 - Following a serious incident within the DBA
- 1.2 All risk assessment requests should be directed to the Chief Executive of Water Safety Ireland (WSI). The approved risk assessment report should be issued with the minimum of delay after the date of completion and review of the risk assessment.
- 1.3 WSI shall ensure that any DBA risk assessment carried out is accredited by ILSE.
- 1.4 The ILSE accredited Risk Assessor, shall be supplied with all necessary documentation and maps in relation to the DBA. The WSDO may accompany the risk assessor if considered necessary.
- 1.5 The WSDO should advise the relevant local authority Department on the implementation of the recommendations of a DBA risk assessment report within a reasonable period of time.
- 1.6 Where it considers it necessary, WSI may itself undertake a risk assessment in the interests of public safety and bring its findings to the notice of the appropriate authorities.

2. Inspection and maintenance of the Public Rescue Equipment (Ringbuoys) within the DBA

- 2.1 Public rescue equipment sited within the DBA should be inspected and maintained in accordance with the Public Rescue Equipment WSI Guidance Note No.1, in consultation with the WSDO

3. DBA Emergency Access & Egress

- 3.1 Where required by the risk assessment, DBA to have clearly marked access and egress routes.

4. Zoning within the DBA

- 4.1 Where required by the risk assessment, DBA to be zoned to ensure the safety of all users.

5. Lifeguarding within the DBA

5.1 Where required by the risk assessment, DBA to be lifeguarded.

5.2 Lifeguards should be employed by the Local Authority to lifeguard the DBA from June to September, dependent on local arrangements or where reasonably practicable.

5.3 Lifeguards should be qualified in accordance with International Lifesaving Federation standards and be provided with standard lifeguard uniform and equipment, in consultation with the WSDO, as recommended in risk assessment report and Water Safety Ireland guidelines.

6. Water Safety Signage within the DBA

6.1 Where required by the risk assessment, the relevant Local Authority Department, in consultation with the WSDO, will provide water safety signage and safety information boards to be sited and maintained within the DBA. All signage shall comply with ISO and An Commissioner Teanga regulations in regard to the use of text (Gaelige first followed by English text).

Water Safety Ireland
Water Safety Guidance Note Number 3
Management of Traditional Bathing Areas (Non Designated Bathing Areas)

Status	Approved by WSI Council: 2 February 2022 Approved by CCMA: 17 February 2022
Approval Date	17 February 2022
Effective Date	1 June 2022

Traditional Bathing Area (Non DBA)

**A Traditional bathing area (Non-DBA) is a aquatic location where a seasonal daily average of 25 bathers may be present during the bathing season and is a historical popular local bathing area.*

1. Risk Assessment of Traditional Bathing Area (Non DBA)

1.1 Traditional Bathing Area (Non DBA) to be risk assessed:

- At the request of the Local Authority, under advisement of the WSDO
- At least once
- Following a serious incident within the traditional *bathing area* (Non DBA)

1.2 All risk assessment requests should be directed to the Chief Executive of Water Safety Ireland (WSI). The approved risk assessment report should be issued with the minimum of delay after the date of completion and review of the risk assessment. WSI shall ensure that any Non-DBA risk assessment carried out is accredited by ILSE. The ILSE accredited Risk Assessor, shall be supplied with all necessary documentation and maps in relation to the DBA. The WSDO may accompany the risk assessor if considered necessary.

1.3 The WSDO should advise the relevant Local Authority department on implementation of the recommendations of the risk assessment report within a reasonable period of time.

1.4 Where it considers it necessary, WSI Ireland itself may undertake a risk assessment in the interests of public safety and bring its findings to the notice of the appropriate authorities.

2. Inspection and maintenance of the Public Rescue Equipment (Ringbuoys) within the Traditional Bathing Area (Non DBA)

2.1 Local authority public rescue equipment sited within the traditional *bathing area* (Non DBA) should be inspected and maintained in accordance with the Public Rescue Equipment WSI Guidance Note No.1, in consultation with the WSDO

3. Water Safety Signage within the Traditional Bathing Area (Non DBA)

3.1 Where required by the risk assessment, the relevant Local Authority Department, in consultation with the WSDO should provide water safety signage and safety information boards to be sited and maintained within the traditional bathing area (Non DBA). All signage shall comply with ISO and An Commissioner Teanga regulations in regard to the use of text (Gaeilge first followed by English text).

Water Safety Ireland
Water Safety Guidance Note Number 4
Management of a Dangerous Beach/Dangerous Aquatic Location

Status	Approved by WSI Council: 2 February 2022 Approved by CCMA: 17 February 2022
Approval Date	17 February 2022
Effective Date	1 June 2022

Dangerous Beach/Dangerous Aquatic Location

**Dangerous beach/aquatic location is a location where water safety hazards are present and fatal drownings have occurred*

1. Risk Assessment of Dangerous Beach/Aquatic Location

1.1 Dangerous beach/aquatic location to be risk assessed:

Following a fatal drowning

1.2 All risk assessment requests should be directed to the Chief Executive of Water Safety Ireland (WSI). The approved risk assessment report should be issued with the minimum of delay after the date of completion and review of the risk assessment.

1.3 WSI shall ensure that any dangerous beach/aquatic location risk assessment carried out is accredited by ILSE.

1.4 The ILSE accredited Risk Assessor, shall be supplied with all necessary documentation and maps in relation to the dangerous beach/aquatic location. The WSDO may accompany the risk assessor if considered necessary.

1.5 The WSDO should advise the relevant Local Authority Department on the implementation of recommendations of dangerous beach/aquatic location risk assessment report within a reasonable period of time.

1.6 Where a dangerous occurrence has been reported, the WSDO should inspect the location and may request a risk assessment to be carried out by WSI

1.7 Where it considers it necessary, WSI may itself undertake a risk assessment in the interests of public safety and bring its findings to the notice of the appropriate authorities.

Water Safety Ireland Water Safety Guidance Note Number 5 Local Authority management of a public amenity location* adjacent to an aquatic environment	
Status	Approved by WSI Council: 2 February 2022 Approved by CCMA: 17 February 2022
Approval Date	17 February 2022
Effective Date	1 June 2022

Public amenity location adjacent to an aquatic environment

** Public amenity location adjacent to an aquatic environment is a location under the control of the local authority and maintained by the local authority on a regular basis and where the public are invited to enter and enjoy e.g., picnic areas adjacent to river or lake or sea or canal. Bathing does not occur at this location but there may be a risk to public safety due to proximity to the open water course.*

1. Risk Assessment of Public amenity location adjacent to an aquatic environment

- 1.1 The local Authority should develop a register of public amenity locations adjacent to an aquatic environment across its county and under its control.
- 1.2 The local Authority, in consultation with the WSDO, can decide if a location is required to be risk assessed. All risk assessment requests should be directed to the Chief Executive of Water Safety Ireland (WSI). The approved risk assessment report should be issued with the minimum of delay after the date of completion and review of the risk assessment. WSI shall ensure that any public amenity location adjacent to an aquatic environment risk assessment carried out is accredited by ILSE. The ILSE accredited Risk Assessor, shall be supplied with all necessary documentation and maps in relation to the DBA. The WSDO may accompany the risk assessor if considered necessary.
- 1.3 Local Authorities should implement the recommendations of the risk assessment report within a reasonable period of time, in consultation with the WSDO
- 1.4 Where it considers it necessary, WSI itself may undertake a risk assessment in the interests of public safety and bring its findings to the notice of the appropriate authorities.

2. Inspection and maintenance of the Public Rescue Equipment (Ringbuoys) at the Public amenity location adjacent to an aquatic environment

- 2.1 Where required by the risk assessment, local authority public rescue equipment sited within the public amenity location adjacent to an aquatic environment should be inspected and maintained in accordance with the Public Rescue Equipment WSI Guidance Note No.1, in consultation with the WSDO.

3. Water Safety Signage at the Public amenity location adjacent to an aquatic environment

- 3.1 Where required by the risk assessment, the relevant Local Authority Department, in consultation with the WSDO, should provide water safety warning signage to be sited and maintained at the location. All signage shall comply with ISO and An Commissioner Teanga regulations in regard to the use of text (Gaeilge first followed by English text).

Water Safety Ireland
Water Safety Guidance Note Number 6 (Rev 00):
Management of Local Authority Slipways

Status	Approved by WSI Council: 2 February 2022 Approved by CCMA: 17 February 2022
Approval Date	17 February 2022
Effective Date	1 June 2022

Local Authority Slipway

**A man-made structure, under the control of the Local Authority and maintained by the Local Authority, providing a slope leading down into water, used only for the purpose of launching and landing watercraft or for building and repairing them*

1. Risk Assessment of Slipways

- 1.1 The Local Authority should develop a register of local authority public slipways across the county under its control.
- 1.2 The local Authority, in consultation with the WSDO, can decide if a location is required to *be* risk assessed. All risk assessment requests should be directed to the Chief Executive of Water Safety Ireland (WSI). The approved risk assessment report should be issued with the minimum of delay after the date of completion and review of the risk assessment. WSI shall ensure that any slipway risk assessment carried out is accredited by ILSE. The ILSE accredited Risk Assessor, shall be supplied with all necessary documentation and maps in relation to the DBA. The WSDO may accompany the risk assessor if considered necessary.
- 1.3 Local Authorities should implement the recommendations of the risk assessment report within a reasonable period of time.
- 1.4 Where it considers it necessary, Water Safety Ireland itself may undertake a risk assessment in the interests of public safety and bring its findings to the notice of the appropriate authorities.

2. Inspection and maintenance of the Public Rescue Equipment (Ringbuoys) at the slipway

- 2.1 Where required by the risk assessment, local authority public rescue equipment sited *adjacent to a slipway* should be inspected and maintained in accordance with the Public Rescue Equipment WSI Guidance Note No.1, in consultation with the WSDO.

3. Water Safety Signage at the Slipway

- 3.1 Where required by the risk assessment, water safety warning signage should be sited and maintained at the location. All signage shall comply with ISO and An Commissioner Teanga regulations in regard to the use of text (Gaeilge first followed by English text).

4. Slipway Inspection and Maintenance

- 4.1 A periodic inspection and maintenance programme of local authority slipways should be developed and undertaken by the Local Authority to ensure the safety of members of the public.

Water Safety Ireland
Water Safety Guidance Note Number 7
Role of Water Safety Development Officer

Status	Approved by WSI Council: 2 February 2022 Approved by CCMA: 17 February 2022
Approval Date	17 February 2022
Effective Date	1 June 2022

1. Water Safety Ireland Safety Guidelines

1.1 Water Safety Development Officer (WSDO) to advise Local Authority Management of the requirements of Water Safety Ireland (WSI) guidance notes. WSDO will liaise between WSI, the Local Authority and other relevant rescue service stakeholders on all matters of water safety

1.2 Local Authority should ensure that their relevant departments implement the requirements of these guidance notes as required. WSDO should offer advice to the relevant local authority departments on the implementation of these guidance notes (where required, the WSDO may also seek further advice from WSI as necessary).

2. Local Authority Management of Water Safety

2.1 WSDO to report to their relevant line manager on an ongoing basis on all aspects of local water safety.

3. Local Authority Annual Water Safety Budget

3.1 WSDO to ensure, with Line Manager support, the provision and management of the annual Local Authority Water Safety Budget.

4. Inspection and maintenance of the Public Rescue Equipment (Ringbuoys)

4.1 Local Authority, in consultation with the WSDO, should ensure that their relevant departments have an annual programme in place regarding the ongoing inspection and maintenance of local authority public rescue equipment and records of same are maintained (in accordance with WSI guidelines). WSDO should ensure that an annual audit of the programme takes place. The Local Authority maintains the programme in accordance Water Safety Guidance note No.1.

5. Lifeguarding at Designated Bathing Areas (DBA's)

5.1 Where recommended by a risk assessment, the Local Authority should ensure that their relevant departments have an annual programme in place regarding the provision and supervision of a lifeguard service at designated bathing areas (in accordance with WSI guidelines).

The WSDO may offer advice as required to the relevant local authority department regarding the provision of this lifeguard service (where required, the WSDO may also seek further advice from WSI as necessary).

5.2 WSDO to arrange for the provision of all necessary equipment to allow lifeguards complete their duties.

5.3 WSDO to arrange for the annual Local Authority Lifeguard testing, induction training and seasonal competency professional development training where relevant.

5.4 WSDO to arrange for the provision of adequate pool and beach lifeguard courses where relevant.

5.5 The WSDO, will act in a supervisory role to oversee the duties of the Beach / Inland Waterways Lifeguards and to ensure that the lifeguard service is fully operational and functioning in accordance with WSI guidelines during the designated bathing season.

6. Water Safety Signage

6.1 Where recommended by a risk assessment, the Local Authority should ensure that their relevant departments have a programme in place regarding the provision and maintenance of water safety signage at required locations (in accordance with WSI guidance notes).

WSDO may offer advice as required to the relevant local authority departments regarding the provision of water safety signage (where required, the WSDO may also seek further advice from WSI as necessary).

7. Water Safety Promotion

7.1 The WSDO should support WSI in the promotion of water safety locally by completion of the following activities as required:

- Provision of press releases to the Local Authority Media Officer for release to local media as required.
- Be the point of contact for all local third-party aquatic organisations in relation to the promotion of local water safety.
- Liaise with WSI and Water Safety Area Committee (WSAC) on behalf of a Local Authority as per the WSAC Rules and Regulations.
- Promote Water Safety Ireland educational programmes locally as required e.g., Primary Aquatics Water Safety (PAWS); Summer/Winter programmes.
- Promote WSI National Drowning Prevention Plan locally as required.

8. Risk Assessments

8.1 WSDO to request from WSI for the completion of water safety risk assessments and reports on beaches and other aquatic locations as required.

9. Other Activities

9.1 WSDO may provide in-house water safety training as required and if competent to do so.