



## Bank holiday water safety appeal from Coast Guard, RNLI & Water Safety Ireland Organisations caution against taking inflatables on the water

As the June bank holiday approaches, the Coast Guard, RNLI and Water Safety Ireland have issued a joint water safety appeal. Many people are expected to take advantage of the break and visit the coast and inland waters. The organisations are asking people to check that they have the correct equipment they need to enjoy their activities and that they know what to do in the event of an emergency.

Water based activities are safe and enjoyable with the right equipment. However, inflatable toys are not suitable for use in open water, including at the seaside and on inland waters and rivers. Inflatable toys, including dinghies and air mattresses can quickly blow out to open waters or capsize. They should not be used in any open waters.

The three organisations have issued a joint water safety appeal as the summer months traditionally bring an increase in callouts for the search and rescue organisations, including the Coast Guard and RNLI crews, many of whom are volunteers.

As the popularity of kayaking, canoeing and paddle boarding increases, the safety advice for these activities includes:

- **Always have a means for calling for help and make sure you can access it when you are out on the water**
- **Tell someone where you are going and what time you expect to return**
- **Wear a lifejacket or buoyancy aid**
- **Always check the weather forecast and sea conditions before you set off.**
- **Paddle in a group where possible. If you're exploring somewhere new, seek knowledge from experienced practitioners in the area.**

Irish Coast Guard Operations Manager Micheál O'Toole said, "We want everybody to enjoy our waters but please pay attention to your own safety. Never ever swim alone and if you are using a boat or kayak, please ensure that if an emergency arises and you need assistance, that you are capable of contacting the Coast Guard with a marine VHF radio, PLB or EPIRB. Never rely on a mobile phone alone."

RNLI Water Safety Delivery Support Lisa Hollingum added: "It's great to see people getting out and taking part in water based activities this summer but it's important to know what to do if something unexpected happens. There are so many great products on the market for water safety and something as simple as a water proof pouch to hold a means of communication for when you go out on a paddle board or kayak, can make all the difference."

Water Safety Ireland's Acting CEO, Roger Sweeney added, "This weekend, the Lifeguards trained and assessed by Water Safety Ireland begin summer patrols at local authority run bathing areas. Last year, they rescued 473 people and provided first aid to 6,700 people. This weekend, let them be there for you. Bring your loved ones to any of the lifeguarded waterways listed at [www.watersafety.ie](http://www.watersafety.ie)."

**If you see somebody in trouble on the water or along the coast, or think they are in trouble; Dial 999 or 112 or use VHF radio CH 16 and ask for the Coast Guard.**

Further water safety contained in the 'Be Summer Ready' campaign is available here <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/9e76d-be-summer-ready/>

### Ends

Media Enquiries to:

Water Safety Ireland, The Long Walk, Galway. [info@watersafety.ie](mailto:info@watersafety.ie) / [www.watersafety.ie](http://www.watersafety.ie); Tel: 091-564400

Roger Sweeney 087-678.9601 / [rogersweeney@watersafety.ie](mailto:rogersweeney@watersafety.ie)

Padraig Judge 087-459.0156 / [padraigjudge@watersafety.ie](mailto:padraigjudge@watersafety.ie)

Ciara Gleeson 087-331.9164 / [ciaragleeson@watersafety.ie](mailto:ciaragleeson@watersafety.ie)