



**NATIONAL WATER SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK (June 12 – 18)
PRESS RELEASE - WATER SAFETY IRELAND**

15 June 2023

85 drownings last year prompts call for caution near water

As a weekend of aquatic activity approaches, Water Safety Ireland has issued an appeal calling for caution when visiting waterways nationwide. The appeal comes as figures released for 2022 show that 85 people drowned nationwide, an increase of 5 over the previous year. 60 were male, 25 female.

In the last five years, an average of 90 people drowned annually and accounted for nearly 40% of all road and water deaths combined*. (*Road: 714; Water: 449; Total 1,163)

“85 people drowned in 2022, five more than in 2021 and although this is lower than the annual average of 90 drownings every year, it is still a tragic unnecessary loss of life,” commented Minister Heather Humphreys, Minister for Rural and Community Development. “Ireland is currently enjoying warmer weather, however our waterways are still quite cool,” added Minister Humphreys, “Please swim at lifeguarded waterways or in designated bathing areas that are traditionally known to be safe. Stay within your depth, supervise children closely and never use inflatable toys on open water as you can be swept from shore by currents and unexpected breezes.”

“Ireland has some of the most beautiful waterways in the world but people should never overestimate their ability in the water or underestimate the risks.”, said Humphreys. “Drownings can happen quickly and silently and I appeal to people to have regular water safety conversations with loved ones so that we have a safe enjoyable summer ahead.”

NATIONAL WATER SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK (until June 18th):
<https://watersafety.ie/national-water-safety-awareness-week/>

Water Safety Ireland’s National Water Safety Awareness Week Appeal:

1. Swim at Lifeguarded waterways between the red and yellow flags. A full list of lifeguarded waterways is available at www.watersafety.ie/lifeguards. If you cannot get to a lifeguarded waterway, swim at designated bathing areas that are traditionally known to be safe.
2. Swim within your depth – stay within your depth.
3. Supervise children closely and never use inflatable toys in open water.
4. When walking exposed sandbanks be aware that incoming tides can lead to stranding. Carry a fully charged mobile phone in a waterproof pouch.
5. Wear a lifejacket when boating or angling from shore and make sure that it is fitted with a crotch strap.
6. If you see someone in difficulty, these simple steps may save a life:
 - a) Shout to the casualty to orientate and encourage them to shore.
 - 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 999 or 112 and ask for the Coast Guard.

Ends

Media Enquiries to:



Water Safety Ireland, The Long Walk, Galway. info@watersafety.ie / www.watersafety.ie; Tel: 091-564400; Joanne Walsh 087-199.0339 / joannewalsh@watersafety.ie; Roger Sweeney 087-678.9601 / rogersweeney@watersafety.ie ; Padraig Judge 087-459.0156 / padraigjudge@watersafety.ie