



PRESS RELEASE - WATER SAFETY IRELAND

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Water Safety Ireland, Coast Guard and RNLI issue joint call to action for World Drowning Prevention Day – July 25

To mark World Drowning Prevention Day, July 25, Water Safety Ireland, the Coast Guard and the RNLI are calling on people to “Do One Thing or Improve One Thing” to help prevent drownings.

Participation in a wide variety of year-round water-based activities has increased recently, especially in smaller leisure craft, such as kayaks, canoes and stand-up paddle boards (SUPs). The call to action asks that people have well-maintained equipment, a means of calling for help and properly fitting lifejackets or flotation devices on every trip.

At this time of year, many people are taking their first summer dip and are not climatized to the dangers presented by open water such as hidden depths and hazards, entanglement, and dangerous currents. Be alert to local warning signs and never assume that the absence of a sign indicates a lack of danger.

“Our call to action for World Drowning Prevention Day is that swimmers be aware of dangerous rip currents and to swim at Lifeguarded waterways or at a place that is traditionally known locally to be safe,” commented Roger Sweeney, Deputy CEO, Water Safety Ireland. “Rips are strong currents running out to sea that can quickly drag people from the shallows into deeper water. Rip current channels can often be mistaken for a safe swimming spot because the channel of water appears flat and is surrounded by a choppiest sea surface. The best way to avoid rips is to swim at a lifeguarded waterway between the red and yellow flags. Last summer, Lifeguards rescued 583 people nationwide and provided first aid 6,500 times so let Lifeguards be there for you this summer. Find out what you can do for World Drowning Prevention Day by visiting www.worlddrowningpreventionday.ie.”

Coast Guard Operations manager Gerard O’Flynn said; We appeal to everybody to attend to their own personal safety. Always check the weather forecast, confirming that weather is suitable for your chosen activity, check tide times, establish if the tide is ebbing or flooding. Users of all forms of recreational craft are reminded to familiarise themselves with the Code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft which can viewed at www.safetonthewater.ie.”

Speaking on World Drowning Prevention Day, Linda-Gene Byrne, RNLI Regional Water Safety Lead said: ‘The summer holidays are well underway bringing an increase in the amount of people enjoying our coast and inland waters but this does mean there is likely to be an increase in the number of water related incidents as well.’

‘Many of the incidents during the school holidays involve children and teenagers and we would urge everyone – but families in particular – to be aware of the risks and know what to do in an emergency. ‘We want people to enjoy the water but urge everyone to think about their own safety, take time to familiarise yourself with our advice and to share this with your family and friends. The challenge for World Drowning Prevention Day is one that can easily be adopted by families enjoying the water with a simple conversation before engaging in their chosen activity.’

If you see somebody in trouble on the water or along the coast or think that they are in trouble, use marine VHF Ch 16 or dial 112 and ask for the Coast Guard.



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