



## **75% of drownings occur close to home Appeal for Active Child Supervision this August Bank Holiday Weekend**

An appeal to parents and guardians to supervise children closely when visiting waterways over the bank holiday weekend comes as figures from Water Safety Ireland show that of the 9 people that drown every month, 75% occur close to home, within the home county of the victim.

The August bank holiday weekend is a particularly busy period for waterway activities. Drownings often happen quickly and silently, with activities like swimming, falling into deep water while walking at the water's edge, hiking, fishing, and boating accounting for over 80% of drownings. Males represent the vast majority of deaths in Irish waters – nearly 80%. Most drownings occur at inland water sites – nearly 60%. Alcohol is a factor in 30% of drownings. Almost 75% of drownings occur within the home county of the victim. In the last decade, an average of 105 drownings occurred in Ireland every year.

“Thousands of people will visit friends and family this weekend, and water activities are an important part of many gatherings”, commented Heather Humphreys, Minister for Rural and Community Development, “Please ensure that children receive constant, uninterrupted, adult supervision when enjoying water activities.”

“On average nine people drown in Ireland every month and while one drowning is one too many, this number would be considerably higher if it wasn't for the lifeguards that watch over our waterways. This weekend I encourage parents and guardians to bring children to lifeguarded waterways.”

Bank Holiday advice to help keep children safe:

### **Water Safety Ireland's August Bank Holiday appeal to keep children safe:**

1. Swim at lifeguarded waterways between the red and yellow flags – full list available at [www.watersafety.ie/lifeguards/](http://www.watersafety.ie/lifeguards/)
2. If there is no lifeguarded waterway near you, then swim at known traditional bathing areas where there are ringbuoys erected that you can use for rescues. Ask for local knowledge to determine local hazards and safest areas to swim. Pay attention to any safety signage identifying hazards.
3. Inflatable toys pose a real threat to life and should not be used at open water locations as the slightest breeze can take children away from shore, out of their depth. Parents and guardians need to be particularly careful to ensure that children are supervised at all times in, near or on water.
4. Swim within your depth and stay within your depth. Make sure that the edges are shallow shelving so that you can safely and easily enter and exit the water.
5. Never allow your children to swim in quarries or reservoirs.
6. Alcohol is a factor in one third of drownings – never mix alcohol with water activities.
7. Always wear a correctly fitting lifejacket when boating and have a means of communication in a waterproof pouch.
8. Always check the weather and tides before heading out on the water.
9. Beware of stranding by incoming tides. Carry a charged phone at all times and in an emergency, call 999 or 112 and ask for the Coast Guard.
10. If you see somebody in trouble in the water: SHOUT – REACH – THROW
  - a. SHOUT to calm, encourage and orientate them;
  - b. REACH with anything that prevents you from entering the water (clothing/stick);
  - c. THROW a ringbuoy or any floating object to them.

If you find yourself in a coastal emergency, call 999 or 112 for the Coast Guard.

**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; Joanne Walsh 087-199.0339 / [joannewalsh@watersafety.ie](mailto:joannewalsh@watersafety.ie); Roger Sweeney 087-678.9601 / [rogersweeney@watersafety.ie](mailto:rogersweeney@watersafety.ie) ; Padraig Judge 087-459.0156 / [padraigjudge@watersafety.ie](mailto:padraigjudge@watersafety.ie)