



PRESS RELEASE

5th July 2013

Hot weather lulls people into a false sense of security. Use Lifeguarded waterways to stay safe.

Thousands of people are enjoying warmer weather activities at waterways nationwide yet there is an ever present danger that people will drown even in close proximity to shore and close to other water users. Irish Water Safety (IWS) is calling on the public to avoid unsupervised bathing areas and to swim in an area that has a lifeguard. Irish Water Safety has details of all lifeguarded waterways nationwide listed at www.iws.ie.

Having IWS assessed Lifeguards nearby is reassuring in case you need advice, help with first aid or missing children. They are trained to prevent or react to unexpected incidents where seconds can make a difference. However, Lifeguards are not a child minding service and members of the public have a duty of care to protect themselves and their families when visiting waterways nationwide.

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Irish Water Safety

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ADDITIONAL INFO:

Knowing the dangers will reduce the chance of water-related accidents and tragedies.

Rip-Currents – the tidal influence of a new moon on Monday will cause stronger than normal rip currents. It will be the first outdoor swim of the year for many people unaware of the dangers of swimming in open water. To escape a rip current, never swim against this narrow current of water flowing away from a beach. Instead, swim parallel to shore, out of the narrow current, and then swim back to shore.

Cold Water – contrary to the heat on shore, coastal water temperatures are only approximately 12° Celsius. Swimming may give the feeling of warmth but muscles cool quickly in cold water which impairs a person's ability to swim ashore.

Stranding – the tidal influence of a new moon on Monday will expose greater areas of beach, increasing the risk that walkers will be stranded by an incoming tide.

Supervision – Last summer, Irish Water Safety assessed Lifeguards reunited 319 lost children with their guardians. Do not leave children unattended at the water's edge and ensure that they are constantly supervised. Children have drowned silently in a matter of seconds and in just a few inches of water. Constant responsible parental supervision guarantees child safety yet tragic drownings occur every year when children manage to escape the watchful eye of guardians.

In an Emergency – In real life, drowning may not be the violent, splashing call for help that people often imagine. Drowning is deceptively quiet. Although seeing a person shouting and thrashing is likely to mean distress, the waving, splashing and yelling for help that we see on dramatic television shows is rarely seen in real life.

In many cases, there are a number of crisis situations that unfold in the lead up to tragedy:

- You may be unable to shout because your respiratory system is primarily designed for breathing. As you gasp for air, breathing comes first and speech is secondary.
- When your mouth is above the surface, you may only have time to exhale and inhale, without enough time to call for help.
- You may not be able to wave because you will instead instinctively extend your arms to attempt remaining above the surface.
- Struggling to remain at the surface will prevent you from waving or moving towards land and you may struggle for no more than 60 seconds before submersion.

Your ABC to prevent drownings:

A - Ask: “Are you alright?” If they can answer, they probably are but never take it for granted.

B - Blank Stare – Beware: If they do not answer and instead look blankly or panicked, encourage them to shore, reach with clothing or throw them a floating object or ringbuoy.

C – Children playing in water make noise. If they are quiet, then get to them fast - ask questions later.

Don't Delay - Call 112 and ask for Coast Guard.

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