

Joint Press Release

Thursday 5th July 2018

Five drown per fortnight* Know the drowning risks to avoid summer tragedy

Irish Water Safety, Coast Guard and **RNLI** have issued a joint appeal reminding the public to stay alert to the risk of drowning at all times and especially in the current hot weather. On average, five people drown in Ireland every fortnight and the risks increase during July and August, the most popular months for swimming and other water based activities.

Key advice to avoid summer tragedy:

1. Swim within your depth and stay within your depth. Never swim alone.
2. Wear a Lifejacket/Personal Floatation Device when on or near the water and make sure that it has a correctly fitting crotch strap. This applies when boating but equally to both experienced and once-off casual anglers fishing from shore.
3. Supervise children closely and **NEVER NEVER** use inflatable toys in open water.
4. Swim at Lifeguarded waterways listed on www.iws.ie or in areas that are known locally as safe and where there are ringbuoys present to conduct a safe rescue.
5. If you see someone in difficulty, these simple steps may save a life:
 - A. **Shout** to the casualty and encourage them to shore. This may orientate them just enough.
 - 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, call 112 and ask for the Coast Guard.

Spokespersons for the three organisations have reiterated their key safety messages;

IWS; Know What You're Getting Into
Coast Guard; *Stay Afloat- Stay in Contact*
RNLI; Respect the Water

Reminder – If you see somebody in trouble in the water, or if you think they are in trouble Dial 112 and ask for the Coast Guard

Media Enquiries to:

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The RNLI: Niamh Stephenson Tel: 087 1254 124

*Five drownings per fortnight is calculated on the annual average of 127 drownings each year over the ten years 2008 – 2017.