



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **IRISH WATER SAFETY IS PLEADING WITH THE PUBLIC TO WEAR LIFEJACKETS AS ACCIDENTAL DROWNINGS HAVE DOUBLED IN THE LAST TWO YEARS.**

Irish Water Safety (IWS) held a Council meeting today and discussed the latest drowning statistics AS A MATTER OF URGENCY for 2012 which will be released shortly.

147 people drowned last year compared to 162 people who were killed on our roads in crashes.

What was most alarming is that 33 people drowned accidentally in 2010 whilst last year 66 people drowned accidentally. These figures are alarming and IWS are pleading with the public to ensure that they always wear a lifejacket when they are on or near water. Most accidental drownings are preventable so long as people wear lifejackets as our Coast Guard can deploy rescue assets such as lifeboats and helicopters to a casualty, very often in minutes from when they are alerted.

The Council of IWS is concerned that the media and public are not taking heed to our messages and request that they assist us in promulgating the message out to the public as there is an alarming increase in drownings in the last two years. Whilst drowning figures had reduced greatly from an average of 180 ten years ago to 140 last year this trend is now heading in a very worrying direction. With a long summer ahead and a promise of further good weather, IWS pleads with the public when they are on or near the water to **“ALWAYS WEAR A LIFEJACKET” AS “LIFEJACKETS FLOAT – YOU DON’T”**.

### **Inflatable Lifejacket Checklist**

- Ensure your automatic inflatable lifejacket is serviced by an approved agent every year and is in date
- Ensure Cartridges have not been punctured and are secured firmly.
- Ensure all zips, buckles, fasteners and webbing straps are functioning correctly and adjusted to fit the user.
- Check that fitted lights are operating correctly.
- Check that the valve or lifejacket is not leaking.
- Ensure that you lifejacket is fitted with a crotch strap and is fitted correctly.

### **Always ensure it is serviceable condition with all zips, ties and velcros operating correctly Ends**

- Buoyancy Aid – Lifejacket checklist

Further information on lifejackets is at <http://www.iws.ie/guides-page.html>

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