



A draft regulatory framework for Aquatic Leisure facilities in Ireland

Public Consultation

Background & introduction

Following the inquest on the 29th March 2017 in to the tragic fatal drowning of Ronan Kennedy at the Red Barn Quality Hotel in Youghal 14th July 2015, the Dublin Coroner made two crucial recommendations to Minister for Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government, Simon Coveney, T.D.

1. That there should be a dedicated lifeguard on duty at all times at swimming pools and that the lifeguard should not be a person engaged in other supervisory duties.
2. To recommend to the relevant Minister that a dedicated water safety inspectorate is required to formulate regulations and ensure their implementation.

At that time Minister Coveney issued a statement as follows: “First and foremost, the Minister would like to extend his deepest sympathies to the parents and family of three year old Ronan Kennedy who died in such tragic circumstances. The Department understands that the Coroner is to contact the relevant Minister to recommend that a dedicated water safety inspectorate is required to formulate regulations and ensure their implementation. On receipt of the correspondence, the Department, together with other stakeholders, will consider how best to progress this matter. In the meantime, Minister Coveney has indicated that he will provide funding support for Water Safety Ireland (WSI) to review best practice in other European countries with a view to informing the development of an appropriate regulatory framework for Ireland”. This can be a legacy that will turn this tragic drowning in to a positive regulatory framework that will help prevent similar tragedies in the future.

Following a request from the Minister, a working Group was established by the Council of Water Safety Ireland to examine the drafting of such a set of regulations. They have met a number of times since their establishment in June 2017, and have completed a desktop survey and review of available regulatory frameworks from other European Countries. The committee noted that the response to our request for regulatory information from other European countries received displayed a large divergence in content and style.

This is a legacy that will turn this tragic drowning in to a positive regulatory framework that will help prevent similar tragedies in the future to be known as “Ronan’s Regulations”.

On the 17th of October 2018 a meeting was held of stakeholders at the Glenroyal Hotel, Maynooth, Co Kildare. Attached is a copy of the PowerPoint presentation that was used and the replies from the stakeholders present. It should be noted that there was agreement on the day that any regulatory framework should consider the points below

Internal Consultation that took place on the 17th October 2018 was structured as follows:

Establishing a set of design and operation standards to ensure safety is managed in Aquatic Leisure facilities is now a priority for WSI and other stakeholders operating in the sector.

This consultation created discussion and debate and gathered ideas and critical inputs to assist in drafting a regulatory framework for the management, safe operation and design of swimming facilities in Ireland.

Input is now being sought from interested stakeholders and members of the public on the following: Please make your comments in an email to johnleech@iws.ie under the following two headings not later than 12 noon on Friday 26th July 2019

Terms and Conditions

All submissions and comments submitted to Water Safety Ireland for this purpose are subject to release under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2014.

What we will do with your comments?

We welcome all responses to this consultation, which will facilitate us in considering what additional actions may be taken to build on the important work already completed or underway in line with a Draft Regulatory Framework for Aquatic Leisure facilities in Ireland, in a manner that is reflective of the broadest possible range of views from stakeholders and members of the public.

Please note submissions and comments received may be published on this website unless otherwise requested. The onus is on persons making submissions not to include material of a private nature in the body of their submission.

1. Management, Operation and Use

Consideration should be given to the required standards in the following areas (The list is not exhaustive and you should feel free to add additional views if you think it is necessary).

1. Facility operations - Normal Operation Plans (NOPs)
2. Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
3. Staff levels
4. Minimum signage levels
5. Provision of Lifeguards
6. Lifeguard training and qualification.
7. Non Lifeguard staff training
8. Facility Hygiene
9. Facility safety and rescue equipment
10. Emergency Action Plans (EAPs)
11. Customer relations
12. Water quality
13. Plant and equipment
14. Risk Assessment and facility inspections
15. Requirements and responsibilities when facilities are hired by third parties.

2. Facility design

This section should consider what are the design standards required to ensure safety in the operation of Aquatic Leisure facilities. Areas such as

1. Safety by design
2. Environmental considerations
3. Facility access & egress
4. The incorporation of design elements to support use by those less able.
5. Emergency egress
6. Showering facilities
7. Changing facilities
8. Wet surface and floor design
9. Pool depth and shape
10. Pool access and egress
11. Emergency pool egress
12. Emergency lighting
13. Design of plant room and chemical stores

The following Internal stakeholders were invited to these workshops as follows:
(In no particular order of priority)

Ireland Active, EHAI, HSE, the Hotel Federation, Local Government Management Agency (LGMA)-(Local Authorities), Health & Safety Authority (HSA), Swim Ireland, Department of TTAS (Publicly funded pools); Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland (RIAI), Engineers Ireland (EI) and the Irish Insurance Federation (IIF); the Disability Authority; The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH); Department of Education & Skills (Inspectors); Special Olympics; National Parents Council Primary Schools; National Parents Council Secondary Schools; IPB; Physical Association of Ireland (PEAI); RLSS; IT's; ETBAI; Planning Officers in Local Authorities (LA's); NSAI and Failte Ireland.

Interim Report

The interim report following public consultation shall be circulated to relevant stakeholders prior to submission to Michael Ring T.D. Minister for Rural and Community Development.

Final Report

Once the public consultation has been completed a final report and a proposed regulatory framework for Aquatic Leisure facilities will be forwarded to the current Minister with responsibility for water safety, Michael Ring T.D. Minister for Rural and Community Development.

Aquatic Leisure Facilities include the following:

Indoor swimming pools
Outdoor pools
Combinations
Aqua parks
Sports Complex's
Teaching Pools
Hot Tubs
Spas