

PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release
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Irish Water Safety

Stay within your depth when swimming in open water

Irish Water Safety is appealing to the public to stay within their depth when swimming in open water during this current spell of hot weather, following an analysis of the thirteen drownings in last year's heat wave.

1. Swim at Lifeguarded waterways - <http://www.iws.ie/bathing-areas-page.html>
2. If there is no Lifeguarded waterway nearby then swim at a recognized, traditional bathing area
3. Swim within your depth - stay within your depth;
4. Use local knowledge to determine local hazards and safest areas to swim;
5. Ensure that ringbuoys are present;
6. Make sure that the edges are shallow shelving so that you can safely and easily enter and exit the water;
7. Only drink alcohol after your aquatic activity has ended. Stay Away From The Edge after you consume alcohol.
8. Never bring inflatable toys or floating killers to beaches, lakes or rivers

The majority of drownings, 62%, occur inland where river and lake beds can be difficult to see and therefore extremely difficult to determine if you are swimming within your depth. The onset of cramp, combined with the panicked realisation that you are out of your depth can have tragic consequences and be compounded further by the muscle cooling effect of longer periods in open water. Bear in mind that in a recent analysis on drowning over the last 25 years we discovered that 32% of drowning victims had consumed alcohol so stay away from water when you have been drinking.

If you see someone in difficulty, these simple steps may save a life:

1. **Shout** to the casualty and encourage them to shore. This may orientate them just enough.
2. **Reach** out with a long object such a branch or a piece of clothing but do not enter the water yourself.
3. **Throw** a ringbuoy or any floating object and call 112 for the coast guard.

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