

## **FIVE PER FORTNIGHT DROWN IN IRELAND MAY BANK HOLIDAY INCREASES RISK SO KNOW YOUR LIMITS**

There are 140 drownings in Ireland every year – that's more than five per fortnight. As we approach the May Bank Holiday weekend, water safety should be prioritised by anyone coming close to coastline or inland waterways and when pursuing water-based or waterside activities to avoid the dangers of cold shock, hypothermia and drowning.

There are many reasons people drown yet on Bank Holiday weekends, people often become complacent and put themselves and their families in situations that result in injury or loss of life.

People have a responsibility to themselves and family to stay safe around water by knowing the dangers and learning from the situations that have led to tragic drownings in the past:

- Always wear a Lifejacket when on water and ensure that it has a correctly fitted crotch strap.
- Shore walkers should stay away from the edge and beach walkers should remain vigilant to the dangers of being stranded.
- Ensure that you are fully trained and competent for your aquatic activity.
- Be mindful of the safety of family and friends, especially children. Children are naturally curious about water and constant supervision is the safest way to avoid tragedy. Parents of primary school children should check if their local school has yet introduced Irish Water Safety's PAWS programme – Primary Aquatics Water Safety, which teaches children all about staying safe around water. The program is now a component part of the physical education strand of the primary school curriculum and is key to reducing child drowning mortalities and injuries. Now is the time to instill good habits in time for the summer months ahead.
- Anglers should be extremely vigilant when fishing from the shoreline of Atlantic swells.
- Swimmers should swim parallel and close to the shore and be aware that water is still too cold for extended swims.
- Alcohol should be avoided before or during any aquatic activity. On average, a third of drowning victims had consumed alcohol therefore it is best left until after your activity to celebrate.
- In emergency situations, never hesitate to call 112 or 999 and ask for the CoastGuard.

Irish Water Safety encourages everyone to take swimming, lifesaving, survival and rescue classes - for further information click on [www.iws.ie](http://www.iws.ie). If you locate missing Ringbuoys then log on to [www.ringbuoys.ie](http://www.ringbuoys.ie) to report them as "a stolen ringbuoy could lead to a stolen life" in an emergency.

### **Media Enquiries to:**

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Five Per Fortnight based on a ten year average of 140 per annum