

ELEVEN DROWN IN IRELAND EVERY MONTH

May Bank Holiday increases risks so Stay Away From Edges

There are 135 drownings in Ireland every year – that's more than eleven per month. The risk increases around bank holiday weekends as people sometimes become complacent and put themselves at risk of stranding, falling in, cold shock, hypothermia and drowning. The lead up to next Monday's full moon will result in stronger spring tides over the long weekend. Learning from the situations that have led to drownings in the past could prevent tragedies:

- Always wear a Lifejacket when on water and ensure that it has a correctly fitted crotch strap.
- Ensure that the condition of your boat is fit for purpose and well maintained throughout the season.
- Stay away from edges and avoid walking where you risk being stranded by incoming tides.
- 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 and is a component part of the physical education strand of the primary school curriculum. Now is the time to instill good habits in time for the summer months ahead.
- Anglers should be extremely vigilant, three having drowned so far this year. Atlantic swells present a clear danger to shoreline anglers and a substantial distance from the edge should be maintained at all times.
- 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.
- In emergency situations, never hesitate to call 112 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. Report missing or located ringbuoys, essential for public rescues, at www.ringbuoys.ie.

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