

Twenty Seven fewer people have drowned so far this year than for the same period last year

As we approach the final Bank Holiday weekend of the year, it is encouraging to note that provisionally 27 fewer people have drowned so far this year than for the same period last year. Let us all be mindful that on average five people drown per fortnight so let us ensure that nobody loses their life to drowning this weekend.

The forecast is encouraging and looks dry for the early part of the weekend, so aquatic enthusiasts are likely to be enjoying our waters in various ways and in different types of craft.

During holiday weekends, people tend to be more at risk as they can become complacent and put themselves and their families in dangerous situations. Water-related tragedies can happen in seconds and with an average of 133 drownings every year, the CEO of Irish Water Safety, John Leech is appealing to the public to take personal responsibility to ensure that we don't lose anybody over the weekend by complying with the following best practices:

- Always wear a Lifejacket when on or near water and ensure that it has a correctly fitted crotch strap.
- Surfers, kite boarders, divers, kayakers and sailors should wear suitably warm and waterproof clothing.
- Shore walkers should stay away from the edge and beach walkers should remain vigilant to the dangers of being stranded and should always carry a mobile phone.
- Ensure that you are fully trained and competent for your aquatic activity.
- Children are naturally curious about water and constant supervision is the safest way to avoid tragedy.
- Anglers should be extremely vigilant when fishing from the Atlantic shoreline dangerous swells – wear a lifejacket.
- Alcohol should be avoided before or during any aquatic activity. On average, a third of drowning victims each year had consumed alcohol.
- In emergency situations, call 112 early and ask for the Coast Guard.

We wish you a safe, happy and enjoyable weekend on or in the water.

Ends

Irish Water Safety encourages everyone to take swimming, lifesaving, survival and rescue classes. For further information click on www.iws.ie. If you locate missing ringbuoys then log on to www.ringbuoys.ie to report them.

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