

## **St Patrick's Festival appeal: Eleven drown every month – one third after drinking alcohol Stay away from water when drowning the shamrock**

Irish Water Safety is appealing to those consuming alcohol during the St Patrick's Day Festival to behave responsibly near water. In particular, those boating and angling after a night of drinking are being cautioned that their decisions the next day could still be significantly impaired by alcohol. Eleven people drown in Ireland every month, one third after drinking alcohol.

Half a million primary school children will enjoy St Patrick's Day festivities nationwide but many will lack an awareness of how to stay safe when playing near water. Thirty children drowned in ten years therefore constant responsible supervision near water should be mandatory on the minds of every parent and guardian.

When boating and angling, children and adults should wear a lifejacket that has a correctly fitting crotch strap to avoid the possibility of slipping out through the lifejacket in an emergency. <http://www.iws.ie/boating/personal-flotation-devices.327.html>

Coastal walks with family and friends over the bank holiday weekend present a much higher risk of stranding as people may become trapped by incoming tides. Distraction is always a danger so please avoid walking on sandbanks and keep children at a safe distance from the edges of rivers, canals and inland waterways where 62% of drownings occurred. Water temperatures in these environments are still cold at less than 10 degrees coastal and 7 degrees inland, which puts people at high risk of cold shock and hypothermia if suddenly immersed. <http://www.iws.ie/emergency-situations/hypothermia-what-to-do.355.html> Remember that your lifeline in an emergency is 112.

Irish Water Safety is appealing to parents and school teachers to give vital water safety information to children, all available at Irish Water Safety's website [www.iws.ie](http://www.iws.ie).

### **Media Enquiries to:**

Irish Water Safety, The Long Walk, Galway  
LoCall 1890-420.202 [www.iws.ie](http://www.iws.ie); Tel: 091-564400 Fax: 091-564700  
Mobile: John Leech: 087-6789600; Roger Sweeney 087-6789601