



IRISH WATER SAFETY PRESS RELEASE

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49 have drowned so far this year - Know the risks this August bank holiday weekend.

As August is one of the most popular months for open water swimming, Irish Water Safety is appealing to the public to reduce the risk of drowning by swimming at Lifeguarded waterways and within your depth.

Drownings often happen quickly and silently with 80% of drownings occurring within the home county of the victim. Alcohol is a factor in one third of drownings. Of the 109 drownings last year, 84 were male, 25 female. Males overestimate their skills and competencies and underestimate the risk and danger.

Early returns on the work of lifeguards indicates that it is the busiest bathing season in living memory with 149 lives saved by lifeguards since the the 1st of June. 1,189 people were administered First Aid and 113 children were reunited with their parents.

As the bank holiday approaches, there are several ways to prevent drowning:

Safety tips for August:

1. Swim at lifeguarded waterways - listed at <http://www.iws.ie/bathing-areas/map.372.html>
2. Swim within your depth, stay within your depth.
3. Swim with others in areas that are traditionally recognised as safe. Check to see if a Ringbuoy is present.
4. Never use inflatable toys in open water or swim out after anything drifting.
5. When angling or boating: Wear a Lifejacket. Find out what device suits your needs at <http://www.iws.ie/boating/personal-flotation-devices.327.html>
6. Supervise children at all times near water - thirty aged fourteen and under drowned in a decade.

A. **Shout** to the casualty and encourage them to shore. This may orientate them just enough.

B. **Reach** out with a long object such a branch or a piece of clothing but do not enter the water yourself.

C. **Throw** a ringbuoy or any floating object and call 112 for the coast guard.

Notes:

The bathing season extends from the 1st of June to the 15th of September.

Lifeguards normally would only work at weekends in June, however this year due to the excellent weather, Local Authorities extended their cover to include weekdays.

20 Local Authorities deploy lifeguards <http://iws.ie/bathing-areas/map.372.html>

For June 12 Local Authorities made a return at the time of going to press

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