

PRESS RELEASE IRISH WATER SAFETY

10th May 2007

BEWARE OF THE FLOATING KILLERS

The CEO of Irish Water Safety, John Leech, has today warned the public on the use of inflatable articles for use on water. As our weather has been more settled this year with April being one of the highest on record the water temperature is above average for the time of the year. Many families will be tempted to purchase inflatable toys such as boats, airbeds, floating seats and animals.

These toys are used principally on the continent, in inland lakes and pools or where there is less tidal stream and wind or where areas experience predominantly onshore breezes.

Ireland experiences strong tidal streams and strong variable winds that carry these inflatable toys out to sea and can leave children in distress and lead to drowning of the child and or adult who attempts to rescue them. Regrettably we have had one such drowning this year and I am concerned that we do not have any more.

At present there is no international standard for these toys so their quality varies. Some are of a very poor quality, they are very flimsy, light and unseaworthy.

Some of the most heart wrenching drowning tragedies has involved these inflatable toys. We recommend that families do not use them at all. Should families insist on using them then 100% supervision and vigilance is required. The toys should be tethered with a securing line on to the adult whilst the children are playing with them.

I recommend that families swim on lifeguarded beaches and bathing places, a comprehensive list of these is available at <http://www.iws.ie/html/7>

I am further concerned at the increase in the number of Jet Ski incidents which are occurring nationwide your readers, viewers and listeners are encouraged to learn more about these craft at <http://www.iws.ie/html/197>

The Irish Water Safety Association, the statutory body established to promote water safety in Ireland, issues this advice in the public interest. Courses in swimming, lifesaving, water confidence, survival and resuscitation are available nationwide throughout the year.

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