



# BANK HOLIDAY PRESS RELEASE

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## THREE STRIKES AGAINST AQUATIC INJURIES THIS SUMMER Safety campaign urges three steps to drowning prevention

### 1. SWIM WHERE LIFEGUARDS PATROL – they're trained to keep you safe

Warm summer trips to Ireland's waterways can be an accident waiting to happen if the proper precautions are not taken. One of the safest precautions people can take is to swim at Lifeguarded waterways. Irish Water Safety trained Lifeguards patrol beaches and inland waterways nationwide. Lifeguards are trained to see the dangers develop, can prevent accidents before they happen and respond instantly if they occur. Every year Lifeguards not only carry out all sorts of dramatic rescues but also give on-the-spot advice to keep swimmers. This umbrella of protection is available at Lifeguarded waterways, all of which are listed on Irish Water Safety's website, [www.iws.ie](http://www.iws.ie).

### 2. CHECK YOUR LIFEJACKET – it may save your life.

If you have anything to do with boats and being on or near the water, having a lifejacket and wearing it isn't enough – you also have to check that it works. Wearing a lifejacket will only save your life if you know it works so get it checked. That's the pressing message of a Bank Holiday campaign from Irish Water Safety, which is urging people taking to water-based activities to make sure that their lifejackets and buoyancy aids are fully working as they check their equipment ready for the summer season ahead.

Irish Water Safety is concerned about a noticeable increase in the number of people who use Ireland's waterways without wearing proper protective equipment and recommends that all leisure boating enthusiasts wear a lifejacket that is maintained, correctly worn and fit for purpose. More people than ever before are coming into contact with our extensive network of waterways yet tragically there have been a number of drownings this year where the absence of a lifejacket was a contributory cause.

Irish Water Safety has developed a 14-Steps to Safe Boating Guide to educate water users on the dangers that are ever present when boating. SEE BELOW.

### 3. DROWNING IS FAST AND SILENT – supervise children on holidays.

When the sun is shining and the weather warmer, there's nothing more refreshing than a dip however it is never safe to assume that children will not be injured and this is why water safety must start the moment you arrive at a holiday destination. The swiftness of an accident and its possible outcome is devastating. In the few seconds it takes to turn burgers on the barbecue or dash inside for more cold drinks, a child can drown. The general misconception is that there will be splashing and shouting so parents can come to the rescue. Sadly, this isn't the case. Drowning is fast and silent, which is why many parents don't even know its happening.

Holiday destinations often lull people into a false sense of security and people often put their lives at risk around water as a result of complacency, ignorance of the dangers, a lack of training or a combination of all three. Irish Water Safety has produced the following 14 Steps to safe holidays.

**BELOW: Safe Holidays Guide / Safe Boating Guide / Lifejackets Checklist**

### **Irish Water Safety's 14-Steps to Safe Holidays**

1. On arrival at a holiday centre, which has a swimming pool, do not allow children to go immediately to the pool until you have checked out the safety arrangements. On many occasions there may not be any lifeguard on duty.
2. Swim only after digesting food and never after taking alcohol or immediately after a long journey.
3. Always swim with others, never alone.
4. Be particularly careful of young children wandering off. Constantly supervise children/baby pools that may be next to the main pool without any barrier between them.
5. Check for pool depth markings. There may not be any so you must check the depths yourself if you are a competent swimmer.
6. Ensure that you do not dive into shallow water.
7. Watch out for sudden drops or changes in the gradient of a pool floor.
8. Check for missing, uneven or slippery tiles surrounding or in the pool.
9. Do not swim or do not allow children to swim in a pool with discoloured water.
10. Always swim in designated areas patrolled by lifeguards.
11. Swim with family or friends – never alone.
12. Swim within your depth and parallel to the shore.
13. Never swim after dark.
14. Beware of rip currents, as new moon spring tides are particularly high mid week.

Irish Water Safety very much hopes that boat users will take the following safety advice seriously.

### **Irish Water Safety's 14 steps to safe and enjoyable boating:**

1. Check condition of boat and equipment, hull, engine, fuel, tools, torch.
2. Check the weather forecast for the area.
3. Check locally concerning dangerous currents, strong tides etc.
4. Do not drink alcohol while setting out or during your trip.
5. Carry an alternative means of propulsion e.g. sails and oars or motor and oars.
6. Carry a first aid kit on board and distress signals (at least two parachute distress rockets, two red hand flares).
7. Carry a fire extinguisher, a hand bailer or bucket with lanyard and an anchor with rope attached.
8. Carry marine radio or some means of communication with shore.
9. Do not overload the boat - this will make it unstable.
10. Do not set out unless accompanied by an experienced person.
11. Leave details of your planned trip with someone ashore - including departure and arrival times, description of boat, names of persons on board, etc.

12. Wear a Lifejacket or Buoyancy Aid at all times.
13. Keep an eye on the weather - seek shelter in good time.
14. In Marine Emergencies, call 999 or 112 and ask for Marine Rescue.

### **Lifejackets Checklist**

Visually Check all lifejackets and buoyancy aids for the following deficiencies:

- Ensure CO2 Cartridges have not been punctured and are secured firmly
- Ensure all zips, buckles, fasteners and webbing straps are functioning correctly and adjusted to fit the user
- Check that their lights, if fitted are operating correctly
- Ensure that Automatic Inflation devices if fitted are fully serviced and in date
- Check that the valve or lifejacket is not leaking by inflating the lifejacket overnight
- Discard any faulty lifejackets by destroying them
- Always wear a crotch strop on your lifejacket

For information on buoyancy aids and lifejackets click on the IWS website [www.iws.ie](http://www.iws.ie).

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