



May Bank Holiday Water Safety Appeal from Water Safety Ireland, Coast Guard and RNLI

1st May 2025

As the May bank holiday weekend approaches, Water Safety Ireland, the Coast Guard, and the RNLI are collectively urging the public to prioritise safety and be prepared for summer activities on or near the water.

The organisations recommend that all boats and watercraft, including kayaks and canoes, be thoroughly inspected and maintained after the winter season. This includes servicing engines and ensuring all equipment, especially lifejackets, are in good condition.

When using a boat or other water vessel:

- Always wear a lifejacket and carry reliable communication devices, such as a VHF radio and ideally a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) or Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB), with a mobile phone in a waterproof case as a backup
- Inform someone about your planned route and expected return time

For water-based activities:

- Always have a means to communicate distress effectively
- Check environmental conditions (weather and tides) using available information sources before your trip
- Seek help immediately if you see somebody in trouble on the water or along the coast, or think they are in trouble, by using Marine VHF channel 16 or Dialling 112 and asking for the Coast Guard

For swimmers:

- Water temperatures remain cold at this time of year, so consider wearing a wetsuit to stay warm
- Acclimatise to the water slowly

- Wear a bright swimming cap and consider using a tow float to enhance your visibility
- Never swim alone and always ensure your activity is monitored by a companion

Linda-Gene Byrne, RNLI Water Safety Lead says, “It’s great to see that water and beach leisure time has increased over the years as people enjoy the water however our research shows that 36% of people don’t know what to do if they get into trouble in the water. The RNLI is reminding everyone to remember Float to Live if they find themselves in trouble in water: tilt your head back with ears submerged and try to relax and control your breathing. Use your hands to help you stay afloat and then, once you are through the initial shock, call for help or swim to safety if you can.

If you see somebody in trouble on the water or along the coast, or think they are in trouble, use Marine VHF channel 16 or Dial 112 and ask for the Coast Guard.

Ends

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