



Press Release

18 December 2024

Irish Coast Guard, Water Safety Ireland and RNLI urge caution in or near water and at the coast this Christmas.

The Irish Coast Guard, Water Safety Ireland and the RNLI are jointly appealing to anyone planning a festive dip or swim or intending to enjoy a coastal walk over the upcoming Christmas period, to be mindful of the potential risks and to put safety first.

The increase in popularity of festive dips and swims will see a lot of people taking to the open water over the next few weeks. Many people will also avail of the opportunity to participate in coastal walks and hikes. The three maritime organisations are asking people to check that they have the right information to safely enjoy these activities and that they know what to do in the event of an emergency.

For those taking part in winter dips and swims, the advice is:

- Check weather, wind and tides before going in the water
- Inform someone ashore of your plans and your return time
- Acclimatise slowly when entering the water and stay warm before and after your swim or dip
- Wear a bright cap and tow float to increase your visibility
- Never swim alone and stay within your depth
- Should you get into difficulty or see someone in trouble, call 999 or 112 and ask for the Coast Guard

For those planning to enjoy a coastal walk or run during the Christmas break, the advice is:

- Check weather and tide times before venturing out
- Stay well back from stormy, wintery seas and cliff edges
- Be aware of the conditions and your own capabilities
- If walking or running be aware that coastal paths, promenades, and piers may be slippery or prone to waves breaking over them
- Take a fully charged phone with you
- In an emergency, call 999 or 112 and ask for Coast Guard

Speaking on behalf of the three organisations, Clare McGrath, Water Safety Ireland's Chair said: 'We know many people will be looking forward to getting out and about over Christmas for a walk or run, a dip or swim, or another water-based activity. It is important that everyone plans and prepares accordingly so they can enjoy themselves and come and go safely.

Following simple tips such as checking the weather in advance, letting someone know where you are going and when you are due back and acclimatising slowly when entering the water when swimming or dipping, will all contribute to ensuring your overall safety.

‘For walkers and runners, it is important to know that tide times and heights can vary and can easily catch you out, so always check tables in advance to avoid getting cut off and stranded. While you're out, be aware of your surroundings and the tide's direction.’

As another year ends, the Coast Guard, Water Safety Ireland and RNLI extend their sincere thanks to the search and rescue volunteers who are on call 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year protecting people on the water and extend their best wishes to everyone for a safe and peaceful Christmas.

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