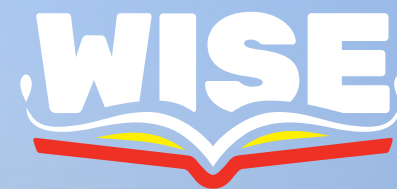


# CITIES & TOWNS



WATER INSIGHT, SAFETY & EDUCATION





Whether inland or on the coast, a huge number of Irish cities and towns are located close to water. Easy access to water has always been very useful – but at the same time, it creates dangers. Sadly around two thirds of drownings each year happen inland and 79% of these are male.

Many rivers and waterways in towns and cities are protected by railings. Despite this, people still find a way into the water. One of the main reasons is... alcohol.

### ALCOHOL AND SWIMMING

Water plus alcohol leads to trouble. Here's why:

- It slows your brain down so you react to dangers more slowly.
- It confuses your senses. If you're in the water, you may not know how far away things and places are.
- It can lower your temperature. This leads to faster hypothermia.
- It affects your judgement and can mean you do things you wouldn't usually do.

### CANALS

In towns, many accidents have happened around canals. That's because they are easy to get to and don't seem very wide. During the summer, they can seem like a great place for a dip – especially if others are diving in. There are many reasons why this is a really bad idea:

- Canals are man-made and have very steep sides. If you fall in, it can be very difficult to climb out.
- Many canals have junk dumped in them that's hidden under the surface. You could easily injure yourself if you jumped on this.
- It's easy to get tangled up in plants hidden under the surface.

- The water at canal locks is very deep. This makes it especially dangerous.
- Canals are often covered in ice during the winter. However this is usually very thin. Never put your foot on ice-covered canals or let an animal onto the ice.
- If you are hot and thirsty, never drink the water - even if it looks clean.

### CANAL RESCUES

- If you are anywhere near a canal, check to see where the ringbuoys are located. If any are missing, report this to [www.ringbuoys.ie](http://www.ringbuoys.ie).
- Never remove a ringbuoy unless you need it to rescue someone who is in the water.
- If there is no ringbuoy, try to reach the person with a rope, stick or clothing – a jumper for example.

### CONSTRUCTION SITES

- Stay away from holes with water in them – you can never tell how deep they really are.
- On muddy building sites, it can be easy to slip into a water-filled trench.
- Digging machinery can churn up ground. When this is very soft, it can fill with water.

### Quarries & Gravel Pits

Sadly, a number of drowning tragedies involving teenagers have happened in quarries. On a hot summer's day it can be very tempting to go for a swim in a quarry pool - but this is a very bad idea because:

- They are completely unsupervised.
- They have no lifesaving equipment like ringbuoys.
- The water can be very deep and extremely cold – far colder than rivers or lakes.
- You never know what is under the surface.
- It can be difficult for emergency services to get into quarries or even know where you are.





**ON A HOT SUMMER'S DAY IT  
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THIS IS A VERY BAD IDEA.**

# ESSENTIAL LEARNING



- 1 NEVER SWIM AFTER DRINKING ALCOHOL**
- 2 ALWAYS CHECK IF THERE'S A RINGBUOY NEARBY**
- 3 NEVER SWIM IN CANALS**
- 4 QUARRIES ARE ESPECIALLY DANGEROUS - THEY'RE INACCESSIBLE AND THEIR WATER IS VERY COLD**
- 5 REPORT MISSING RINGBUOYS AT [WWW.RINGBUOY.IE](http://WWW.RINGBUOY.IE)**





**PART ONE:**

*It's a blazing hot summer's day and Ronan, Max and Ciaran - all aged 13 - decide the swans have the right idea and the canal is a great place to cool off. They grab their towels and swimming stuff, then head down to the 10th lock. Ronan's a pretty good swimmer but the other two have only had lessons in school. Max, however, has also done the WISE course and couldn't help noticing that the ringbuoy holder was empty.*

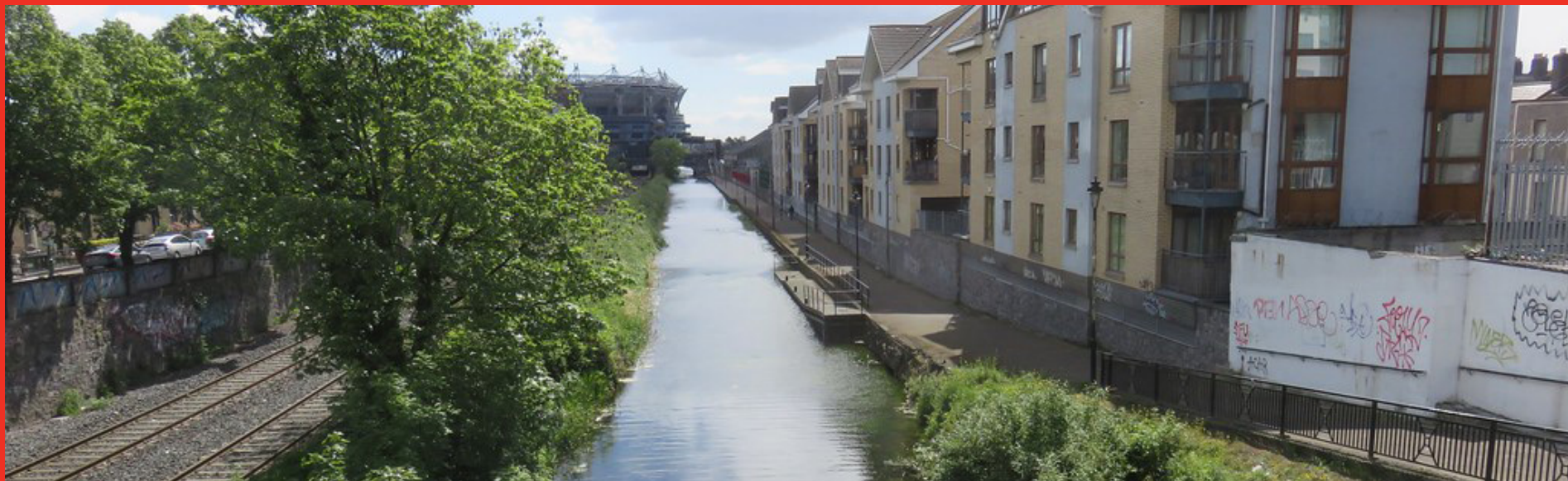
*Ronan immediately jumps in, swims around for a bit and struggles to get out grabbing some weeds to get up the bank. He tells the other lads it's great and they should give it a go. To shut Ronan up, Ciaran jumps in but within a few seconds, he's waving frantically. Ronan goes to dive after him – but Max stays stop!...*

**RISK ASSESSMENT:**

- Is the canal a safe place to swim? Was the location they chose more or less dangerous than the rest of the canal?
- Did they check to see if any ringbuoys were in place?
- Who reacted better to Ronan putting on the pressure – Max or Ciaran?
- Why did Max stop Ronan jumping in straightaway?

**ABILITY ANALYSIS:**

- Since Ronan was a good swimmer, was it OK for him to swim there?
- What equipment did the boys have that they could have used to rescue Ciaran?
- If they phone for help, what directions should they give the emergency services?



## **PART TWO:**

*Holding on to the lock gate with one hand and a corner of his big beach towel in the other, Max throws it towards Ciaran. He tells Ciaran to grab it and he'll then pull him in. Max's head disappears under the surface a couple of times but Ciaran clearly tells him to hold on tight.*

*Ronan is leaning over to pull Ciaran in but Max tells him to lie down on his stomach and reach out instead. Eventually, they pull a spluttering Ciaran onto the bank – he seems to have swallowed a lot of water. Ronan wants to call his mam but Max says 'No – call 112!'*

## **RISK ASSESSMENT:**

- What risks did Max face, even though he used the towel to reach Ciaran?
- After he grabbed the towel, what could still happen to Ciaran before he reached the bank?
- Should Ronan have called his mother instead of 112?

## **ABILITY ANALYSIS:**

- Why did Max tell Ronan to lie down on his stomach as Ciaran was being pulled in?
- What would help prevent Ciaran panicking?
- What should Ciaran do about the missing ringbuoy after the emergency?

