

WATER SAFETY HEROES



WATER INSIGHT, SAFETY & EDUCATION





In Lesson 5, we looked at assessing risks. Now let's see what to do if there is a problem and who can help. A vital thing to remember is this: sometimes there's not much between being a 'hero' and a 'zero'. In trying to fix a problem, you can make it worse by taking the wrong steps.

KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER:

1. If someone's in trouble, they may not be able to let you know by yelling or waving.
2. You need to ALWAYS stay aware of what's going on around you. Is anything different or unusual happening?
3. If there's a problem, contact the emergency services immediately by dialling 112 or 999.



WHEN YOU DO:

- Clearly answer the questions you are asked and stay on the line. They will send the correct service. This video shows what happens when you call:

- Stay calm and reassure the casualty that help is coming
- Don't do anything that puts yourself or anyone else in danger

- 4 **DON'T BE FOOLED BY YOUR OWN ABILITIES** – it takes 11 minutes for the rescue helicopter to reach Lahinch beach from Shannon. It would take an untrained surfer far longer to reach someone. Don't delay the rescue - the most important thing to do is make sure trained help is on its way.



THE HEROES WHO ARE HERE TO HELP: LIFEGUARDS

- At pools and beaches, lifeguards are trained to look out for, and rescue, people in trouble. As well as having great swimming skills, they also have to be highly alert.
- Very often, it's hard to know if someone is having a problem. There's an old (and scary) saying: 'People drown silently'. If you are in trouble, you usually use all your energy trying to stay afloat. This means you can't cry out. So lifeguards always have to keep watch out – and this can be very hard at a crowded beach or pool. It's even harder if people are messing.
- At the beach, lifeguards keep an eye on the weather and sea - particularly currents and tides. They will fly a red flag if it isn't safe to swim. If it's OK, they'll fly red and yellow flags – but remember, it's only safe to swim in the water between the two flags.
- Lifeguards are also trained in First Aid. This lets them give the correct help before the emergency services arrive.



REMEMBER: LIFEGUARDS ARE TRAINED AND KNOW ALL ABOUT LOCAL CONDITIONS AND DANGERS. ALWAYS FOLLOW THEIR INSTRUCTIONS.

In this video, Lahinch Lifeguard Bernard Cahill explains what he does – and tells the story of one very dramatic rescue:



IRISH COASTGUARD

The Coastguard protects the coast of Ireland and some inland waterways.

If there's an emergency at sea (or sometimes inland), they will organise the lifeboat and, if needed, a helicopter. There are 15 lifeboats operated by Community Rescue Boats Ireland plus 46 Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) lifeboat stations. Five helicopters based in Dublin, Waterford, Shannon and Sligo are on duty 24 hours a day.

When you make an emergency call, the Coastguard will decide who to send and also make sure they get there as fast as possible.

This video gives an idea of everything they do:

NATIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE

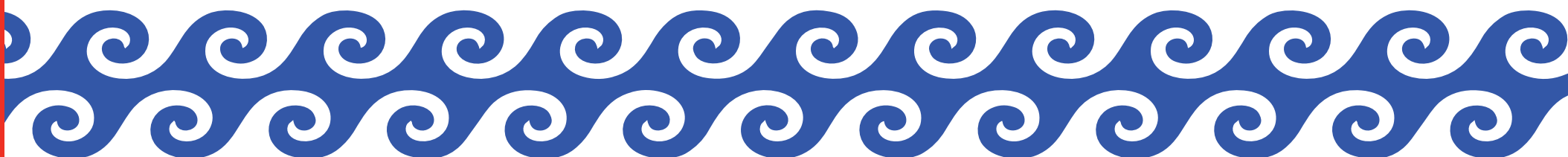
If you're involved in an emergency, it's great to see the blue lights of an ambulance arriving. This means professionals will take over and use all their training and equipment to help.

In 2018, ambulances responded to over 340,000 emergency calls made to 112 and 999. When you call these numbers, a dispatcher asks important questions. These are designed to give the ambulance crew all the information they need to help as soon as they arrive.

One of the most important facts is your location. Giving the Eircode of the nearest building is the best way for them to find you fast.

- If you install the app 'Eircode Finder' on your phone, it lets you find the Eircode of the nearest building.
- If you're too far from any building, open Google Maps, and press the blue dot on the map – you'll see your location appear as two separate map reference numbers. Try it now.

REMEMBER: NEVER MAKE A PRANK CALL TO THE AMBULANCE SERVICE. DOING SO MAY MEAN AN AMBULANCE IS DELAYED FOR SOMEONE WHO REALLY NEEDS IT. YOUR NUMBER WILL ALSO BE KNOWN AND THIS WILL LEAD TO SERIOUS TROUBLE FOR YOU.





**THE MOST IMPORTANT
THING TO DO IS MAKE SURE
TRAINED HELP IS ON ITS WAY**



GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

If there has been a serious emergency involving water, the Gardaí need to know. They will take charge of the situation and may ask everyone involved to explain what happened. It's important to give clear, honest answers – don't try to make up a story or guess.

The first emergency service to arrive may contact the Garda themselves. Otherwise when you call 112 or 999, you'll be asked whether they are needed.

EXERCISE: WHEN DO YOU THINK THE GARDAI SHOULD BECOME INVOLVED IN AN INCIDENT INVOLVING WATER? WHAT SORT OF PROBLEM WOULD THEY NOT NEED TO BE CALLED OUT FOR?

FIRE BRIGADE

It might seem surprising but fire fighters are also trained to deal with water emergencies. In 2018, Cork City Fire Brigade was involved in 54 separate water-rescues or removing people from the water - that's just over one incident a week.

So don't be surprised if a fire engine arrives as part of the emergency team. The fire services work in co-operation with the other services. They can be called in, for example, if special rescue equipment is needed.

NURSES, DOCTORS AND OTHER MEDICAL EXPERTS

Backing up the first responders are all the nurses, doctors and other medical experts who assist after an emergency. The quicker they can help a casualty, the better things usually work out.

The more trained help you can get the better. It's always possible that there is an on-duty nurse or doctor nearby. So if you are waiting for an ambulance and there is someone spare, ask them to see if there is a doctor or nurse nearby.

AND LET'S NOT FORGET...

Let's not forget the people who do work that's vital – but easily forgotten. These are the people who provide and maintain the ring buoys. If those rings aren't there when they're needed, the result can be really bad.

Point to remember: if you ever see that a ring is damaged or missing – **REPORT IT IMMEDIATELY AT RINGBUOYS.IE.**





- 1 DON'T ASSUME YOU KNOW MORE THAN YOU DO.**
- 2 KEEP AWARE OF WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND YOU.**
- 3 DON'T BE SLOW TO ASK.**



ESSENTIAL LEARNING

PART ONE:

It's a lovely summer's day so you and two friends, David and Ana, have taken a trip to a beach you know well but they've never been to before. It's a bit out of the way and a weekday so you hope it won't be too crowded. But getting there, you see quite a few people. One group of kids has a couple of boogie boards – cut down surf boards that aren't really good for anything except splashing around on.

After a while, you see that a 10 year old is out further with a board than you'd go yourself – you suspect a rip current has pushed him out. Then you notice he's off the board and seems to be struggling but isn't shouting. You tell your friends and David immediately wants to swim out – he says he's a strong swimmer but you've never seen proof. What do you do?



RISK ASSESSMENT:

- Is the 10 year old possibly in danger?
- Should you believe David and let him go out?
- What should you do yourself immediately?

ABILITY ANALYSIS:

- What level of knowledge and ability do you think the 10 year old has?
- Can you assume that the kid will be OK if he stays with the board?
- Do you know your exact location if you need to contact the emergency services?



PART TWO:

Sara, a pool lifeguard, is often shocked by people who take risks for stupid reasons – for example people who jump in where they shouldn't and can't swim well enough. Once, a teenager who knew he couldn't swim, jumped off the diving board in front of his friends while the pool was busy.

Immediately he panicked. "His friends told me he couldn't swim" Sara remembered, "so I jumped in and saved him." Why did he jump in even though he couldn't swim? "He said he forgot!" said Sara – but she thinks there might have been another reason...

RISK ASSESSMENT:

- Did the teenager jump in because he 'forgot' – or was it because of peer pressure?
- Was the teenager the only person in danger?
- What should his friends have done before he got on the diving board?

ABILITY ANALYSIS:

- What would have happened if a qualified lifeguard had not been on duty?
- Where should the teenager have been in the pool?
- After the experience, what should the teenager do?

