

## EQUIPMENT

Equipment should be stored out of the sun when not in use; sand/salt should be rinsed off with fresh water regularly. If equipment is damaged don't use it.

## POOL SAFETY EQUIPMENT

All pools and beaches should have some basic safety equipment. Check out what equipment is available and where it is located. If equipment is missing or faulty report it to the hotel management and holiday company representative.

## LIFEJACKETS (Personal Floatation Devices)

PFDs may prevent non-swimmers from sinking but they do not drown-proof the wearer. People in the water wearing brightly coloured PFDs are easy to see. It is important that they fit properly, especially those worn by children, and families intending to take part in water sports should bring their own PFDs if they are not certain on this point. Wet suits alone are not sufficient as they do not keep the face of an unconscious person out of the water.

**SPINAL INJURY:** Every year a number of holidaymakers injure their spines with serious lifelong consequences, often as a result of diving head first into a shallow pool. Investigations have shown that most hotel and villa pools do not have spinal boards. Always enter the water feet first from a sitting position.

## WATERCRAFT

All watercraft should have a kill cord attached to the driver to automatically stop the engine should he/she fall into the water. Safety helmets should be worn and instructions given by the operator beforehand. Watercraft should be operated in a specially zoned area where swimming is prohibited.

## PRE-HOLIDAY

There are a number of things that should be done before a holiday in case an incident occurs;

1. Learn first aid and how to perform CPR  
If an incident requiring first aid occurs you cannot assume that someone else will provide first aid or perform the Kiss of Life or Chest Compressions.
2. Organise swimming lessons for anyone who cannot swim.
3. Check that your holiday insurance includes an air ambulance home should it be needed for a seriously injured member of your family.

4. Check travel advice for your destination given by your government or the World Health Organisation
5. Ask your travel sales representative questions about lifeguards and local watercraft laws before making a firm booking.
6. Consider booking a villa without its own pool if you have young children.
7. If you have young children and /or non-swimmers in your family avoid 'accommodation allocated on arrival' deals.



### DAINGEROUS ASSUMPTIONS

Being able to swim protects you from drowning.

- :: -

His older brother is minding him.

- :: -

It is safe to leave her by herself in the pool.

- :: -

We don't have to supervise—there is a lifeguard.

- :: -

There is a diving board—it is safe to dive.

- :: -

She'll be fine—I can see her from the bar.

- :: -

He is wearing a wetsuit so he cannot drown.

- :: -

There are enforced laws to make water sports safe.

# Water Safety on Holiday

from

THE IRISH LIFESAVING FOUNDATION



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Irish families holiday abroad more than most EU citizens. Every year a number of holidaymakers drown, often within a short time of arriving at their destination. The following advice is offered to help prevent some of these tragic deaths.

### POOL SAFETY

- Don't send your children to the pool immediately after checking in.
- Don't swim immediately after a long journey.
- Before entering a pool, check it out.
- Don't use the pool after dark.
- Don't swim after drinking alcohol.
- Don't swim immediately after eating.
- **Buddy up** your children.
- Never swim alone.
- There should always be adult supervision of children.
- Don't let your children jump from objects into the pool.

### CHECKING A POOL

- Look for warning notices and read them.  
If they are not in English ask what they say.
- Is the pool water clear? Can you see the pool bottom?
- Look for depth markings. Where is the water deep and shallow?
- Study swimmers in the pool checking for steep gradients.
- Look for hidden underwater structures like pool seats or steps.
- Is the toddler pool close to the main adult pool?
- Check the depth of the water under the diving board.  
The Irish and UK minimum depth is 1.5 metres.
- Is the poolside wet and slippery?
- Are the sunbeds too close to the poolside, blocking the walkway?

### VILLA SAFETY

Families booking holidays in private villas will have to lifeguard their own children - all day every day. Do not assume that the pool was built with safety in mind. Water toys should always be put away after use as they may attract children to an unguarded pool. You should check if the pool area is fenced as this is the biggest single proven safety feature.

### BEACH SAFETY

- Observe the beach from a height if possible before entering the water.  
It is easier to see rip currents and hidden underwater objects.

- Look for beach signs or warning notices.
- Take the time to watch the people already in the water.  
Note the depths and activities.
- Are there lifeguards on the beach? Ask their advice.
- Don't enter the water if the waves are high or powerful
- Don't swim after eating food or drinking alcohol
- Is the beach zoned for swimming and water craft activities?
- **Buddy up** children
- Don't stand in the water with your back to the waves
- Observe touch supervision with a strong adult swimmer
- If you get into difficulty float on your back and wave one hand
- Google RIP CURRENTS if you don't know what one looks like.



### PEOPLE

#### LIFEGUARDS

A uniform does not make a lifeguard. Take the time to watch them at work.

- Do they act like they are concerned about the safety of the beach users?
- Talk to the lifeguard(s). Does he/she speak English?

### TOUCH SUPERVISION

Children should be subject to **touch supervision**. The ADULT (16yrs+) supervising them should be a strong swimmer, have not drunk alcohol and be close enough to the children to touch them. Child drowning reports regularly mention that the child was out of sight for only a very short time and that the immersion was silent with no splashing, screams or calls for help.

### WATERCRAFT OPERATORS

You are trusting your own life and/or the life of a loved one to this person.

- Take the time to study the ride and its operator before taking part in any activity. Is he working alone?
- Does the equipment look uncared for (old frayed ropes / rusty equipment / equipment covered in salt or left lying in the sun)?
- Does the operator look out for the safety of those using his ride?
- Does he delay in returning to people who have fallen into the water?
- Does it look like he knows what he is doing?
- Does it look as if there is no control over the use of the jet skis?
- Good operators will have an observer in constant radio contact with the boat(s) and remote cut-off switches on all powercraft.

### ALCOHOL AND WATER SAFETY DON'T MIX

The drinking of alcohol dulls our senses, impairs our judgement and slows down our reactions thereby making it easier to get into trouble; more difficult than normal to recognise that someone else is in trouble and to safely rescue them. Persons with responsibility for the safety of others should never drink alcohol before or during their period of supervision.

#### Advice for persons drinking alcohol :

1. Keep your regular route to and from your hotel room or apartment away from the swimming pool.
2. Don't swim while drinking or after drinking
3. Don't enter water to rescue someone in difficulty
4. Don't supervise children while drinking or after drinking

#### Groups of young holidaymakers :

**Buddy up** – remember the person missing (that no one has noticed) could be you. Partner off beforehand.