

Dermot Ahern Warns Of More Checks To Enforce Lifejacket Rules

Dublin, Monday, 2nd August, 2004

Dermot Ahern T.D., Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, today said there would be increased checks carried out on boat owners to ensure that new rules relating to the wearing of lifejackets are being implemented.

The Minister said Coast Guard teams had monitored boats taking part in the recent Cork Week regatta where there was significant compliance. Other high profile events around the coast will also be monitored. However, he said there was some indication that those using pleasure cruisers on inland waterways were not as compliant. Minister Ahern said: "When you introduce new measures it does take time for people to implement them. However, the new lifejackets measures are designed to save people's lives and adults, in particular, should be providing good example to their children. I know from reports I have received from my officials that there has been good compliance at certain events along our coast. But there are also indications that the levels of compliance on our inland waterways could be improved. The law provides that action can be taken. Prosecutions may follow where the lifejacket rules are being flouted."

The new law makes the wearing of lifejackets compulsory on board any boat of seven metres or less. In addition, a lifejacket or personal floatation devices must be carried on every vessel regardless of size. The new law came into force at the beginning of June. The main provisions of the draft regulations provide that:

- **A lifejacket/ personal floatation device is carried on board for each person (irrespective of the size of craft)**
- **Everyone on board a craft less than 7.0 metres (23 feet) in length must wear a lifejacket/ personal floatation device**
- **Every child less than 16 years of age must wear a lifejacket/ personal floatation device at all times while on deck when the craft is underway**
- **Controls of consumption of alcohol or drugs on board non-mechanically propelled pleasure craft are addressed**

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