

Swim Ireland 'Return to Water' Roadmap

Open Water Swimming Framework

Coronavirus (Covid-19) Update No. 6

Update – 16th May 2020

Following the release of Version 1 of Swim Ireland's 'Return to Water' Roadmap yesterday, please now find attached details of a return to Open Water swimming framework.

Under Phase 1 of the Government of Ireland Roadmap, from Monday 18th May, people in the south are permitted to engage in outdoor sporting and fitness activities on an individual basis. Very small groups – a maximum of four people – are also permitted to engage in outdoor sporting and fitness activity, only where there is no physical contact and social distancing of 2 metres can be maintained. We consider this to be aligned to that detailed within the Northern Ireland Executive's publication of the 'Coronavirus Executive Approach to Decision-Making' on 12th May 2020. However, (and other than in Northern Ireland), people are not permitted to travel more than 5km from their home until Phase 2 commences on Monday 8th June.

At this stage, we are advising that unless you are an experienced Open Water swimmer, you should NOT be entering into open water. We strongly advise against open water swimming for anyone who is not a seasoned sea/lake/river swimmer. We also ask our experienced open water swimmers to consider all the risks to themselves, the respective safety personnel and, if anything were to go wrong, the burden that they would place on the health service. Experienced Open Water swimmers are also to consider any governmental restrictions which are in place at that time. Club swimming/training and swimming lessons remain closed during Phase 1 and Phase 2 of Swim Ireland's Roadmap.

Some points to note:

- If you are not an experienced open water swimmer now is **NOT** the time to learn
- Members of the public should use caution if engaging in water sports, realising there are no lifeguards on the beaches, and many open water swimming areas are closed off to prevent gatherings in the name of social distancing
- The water is still extremely cold and there is a risk of cold-water shock (even if in a wetsuit)
- Swimmers should be cognisant of all risks of open water swimming and what can go wrong and the potential burden on the coastguard, our law enforcement and public health authorities should anything go wrong
- Continue to be mindful of the risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19 and the related public health measures including those of social distancing and the avoidance of larger gatherings

The 'Return to Water Roadmap - Open Water Swimming Framework' can be found [HERE](#)

Please note that this is not a legal document. It is not legal advice or intended as a substitute for any applicable government advice for clubs, members and/or users carrying out their own risk assessment and review. Readers should review this Framework and ensure they are following best practice relative to the environment in which they are operating. We continue to monitor the situation very carefully and will issue further information to our clubs and members as this become available. Please continue to regularly check the Swim Ireland website for further updates and contact Swim Ireland if you have any urgent questions or concerns.