Ring Buoys and Construction Fatality File

Mayor pledges lifebuoys for establishments after sea death

Sliema mayor John Pillow has pledged to supply kiosks, bars, and restaurants along the promenade with lifebuoy rings after a woman lost her life on Saturday in rough seas off Surfside.

“I gave orders that they should be supplied at the earliest opportunity,” Pillow told Times of Malta.

The lifebuoy rings will be in addition to those placed on the beach during the summer months and will remain in place all year round, he said, though he noted that those left at seasonal establishments such as Paradise Exiles would only be available during the summer.

Sliema council will be responsible for supplying the rings, which will be given to bars, restaurants, and kiosks free of charge, he said.

Establishments from Balluta Bay to Qui-Si-Sana Beach, including Fresco’s Café and Restaurant, Dixie’s kiosk in Independence Gardens, Surfside, Il-Fortizza and Compass Lounge will receive the rings, Pillow confirmed.

He said 15 rings were usually placed at shore level along the beach and some were kept there throughout the winter. But some had been washed out to sea.

Pillow also called for the installation of coloured flags – indicating the hazard level for swimming – to be installed at all entrances to the beaches along the promenade.

The announcement follows the death of a 43-year-old Filipino

national on Saturday afternoon after a huge wave dragged her and three other women out to sea as they were standing on the rocks at Fond Għadir.

She was found unconscious when rescued by the Armed Forces of Malta and died in hospital a few hours later.

One tourist who witnessed the tragedy told Times of Malta on Saturday that he was “disgusted” at the lack of safety equipment in the area.

“There were some guys on the beach, but they had nothing to throw,” said David Wyman from the UK. “I was brought up in a seaside town in Devon and there are warning signs and coloured flags all through the year.”

In May, Tourism Minister Clayton Bartolo said the government was considering extending the season providing lifeguard services to include the spring.

At present, the season runs from June 15 to the same day in September, but, with increasing numbers of tourists visiting Malta before the summer, the government was looking at introducing the measure from next year, Bartolo said.

“One cannot change the periods at will because that is all pre-determined in the published tender,” he said.

“But a tender being planned for next year will be taking these changes (swimming habits) into consideration.”