

at which the regatta or competition is taking place;

- attended by a safety vessel carrying a flotation device of the appropriate size for each crewmember;
 - of the pleasure craft, if the safety vessel is only attending the pleasure craft; or,
 - of the crew of the largest vessel being attended, if the safety vessel is attending more than one vessel; or,
- carrying:
 - a flotation device of the appropriate size for each crewmember;
 - a sound-signalling device; and,
 - if operated after sunset and before sunrise, a watertight flashlight.

Alternative equipment for racing-type pleasure craft

Racing-type pleasure craft (other than racing canoes, kayaks or rowing shells) engaged in formal training, in an official competition or in final preparation for an official competition and operated under conditions of clear visibility and attended by a safety vessel may carry, instead of the mandatory equipment described on the previous pages, the safety equipment required under the rules of the applicable governing body.

Personal protection equipment

About 90 per cent of people who drown in recreational boating incidents are not wearing a flotation device. A lifejacket or personal flotation device (PFD) is the best insurance you can have. Find one that suits your needs and wear it.

By law, pleasure craft must have enough Canadian-approved flotation devices of the appropriate size for everyone on board. You can choose between lifejackets and PFDs. Remember, lifesaving cushions are not approved as personal flotation equipment on any vessel.

Lifejackets

Lifejackets come only in red, orange and yellow so you are much more visible while in water. Currently, there are three Canadian-approved types to choose from:

- Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) lifejackets meet very high performance standards and are approved for all vessels. They:

SOLAS lifejacket



Standard Type lifejacket



- will turn you on your back in seconds to keep your face out of the water, even if you are unconscious;
 - come in two sizes: for those over 32 kg (70 lbs.) and those less than 32 kg; and,
 - are available in comfortable and compact inflatable configurations that can be automatically, manually or orally inflated.
- Standard Type lifejackets are approved for all vessels, except SOLAS vessels. They:

- will turn you on your back to keep your face out of the water, even if you are unconscious; and,
- come in two sizes: for those less than 40 kg (88 lbs.) and those greater than 40 kg.

- Small Vessel lifejackets are approved for small vessels. They:

Small Vessel lifejacket



- have less flotation than Standard Type lifejackets;
- will turn you on your back, but may do so more slowly;
- come in two models: keyhole and vest; and,
- come in three sizes.

Future types and designs of lifejackets will improve their wearability and performance.

Personal flotation devices (PFDs)

This type of flotation device is approved for pleasure craft only. You can choose from a wide range of approved types, sizes and colours of PFDs. They do

not all come in red, orange or yellow; but it is a good idea to choose one of these colours so you are much more visible when in water.

Choose a PFD based on your needs and the activity you will be participating in. If you plan on operating at high speeds, look for a PFD with three or more chest belts for security. If you will be operating in cold water (water less than 15°C) choose a PFD with some thermal protection. A large selection of devices designed for specific uses are now available for all types of activities such as sailboarding, kayaking and canoeing.

Can be used for paddlesports



Chest belts are an important feature for high speed operation



There are, however, some pros and cons to choosing a PFD over a lifejacket. A PFD may be more comfortable than a lifejacket because it is designed for constant wear, but PFDs usually offer less flotation than SOLAS, Standard Type and Small Vessel lifejackets. Although they have limited turning capability, some PFDs provide thermal protection against hypothermia. The choice is yours, but consider your needs carefully before purchasing.

Inflatable PFDs are another option but for them to work properly you must understand their operation and maintenance requirements. You should also check which boating activities they are approved for, under the Small Vessel Regulations. For example, people less than 16 years of age or who weigh less than 36.3 kg (80 lbs.), and operators of personal watercraft are prohibited from wearing an inflatable PFD. They come in two styles:

- Vest types can be orally, manually (with a CO₂ system) or automatically inflated.
- Pouch types can be orally inflated, or manually inflated by pulling a toggle to activate a CO₂ inflation system.

before



after



before



after



Though their inflation time is relatively short, for weak swimmers it can seem like forever. All Canadian-approved inflatable PFDs have an oral inflation tube in case the CO₂ inflation mechanism fails. If you are struggling to stay afloat, this tube could be a challenge to use.

An emergency is no time to experiment with a new device. Inflatable PFDs should come with an owner's manual. Look for it and read it carefully. Under supervision and before heading out, try the device on and make sure you know how to use it.



Keeping kids afloat

A lifejacket or PFD is no substitute for adult supervision. Kids should be within arm's reach and should be wearing a proper flotation device at all times.

Before buying a flotation device for your child, make sure the device is Canadian-approved. Find an appropriately sized device and have them try it on. It should fit snugly, not ride up over your child's chin or ears. If there are more than 7.6 cm (3") between your child's shoulders and the device it is too big and could do more harm than good.

Look for these safety features:

- A large collar for head support
- Waist ties or elastic gathers in front and back
- A safety strap that goes between the legs to prevent the device from slipping over your child's head

Look for a large collar



- Buckles on safety straps and reflective tape
- Consider attaching a non-metallic pealess whistle to the device

Parents who want their kids to wear a lifejacket should set a good example and do the same.

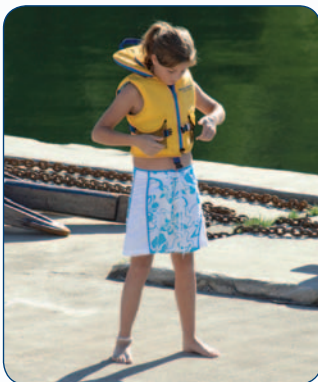
Labels

Look for a lifejacket or PFD with a label that states it has been approved by:

- Transport Canada;
- Canadian Coast Guard;

- Fisheries and Oceans Canada; or,
- any combination of the above.

Foreign visitors to Canada may bring their own flotation device to use as long as it conforms to the laws of their country.



Proper care of your flotation device

Treat your flotation device as an investment and take good care of it. Devices that are ripped or in poor condition are not considered approved.

Lifesaving equipment should never be kneeled on, sat on or used as a fender for your boat. Follow these tips:

- Check its buoyancy regularly in a pool or by wading out to waist-deep water and bending your knees to see how well you float.

- Ensure that straps, buckles and zippers are clean and in good working order.
- Tug on straps to ensure they are well attached and there is no sign of wear.
- Dry your device in open air and avoid direct heat sources.
- Store it in a dry, well-ventilated, easily accessible place.
- Do not dry clean. Use mild soap and running water to clean.



It won't work if you don't wear it

In order to work, proper lifesaving equipment must be worn at all times. Believing that you can locate, don and fasten a PFD in the water is dangerous for many reasons; adverse wind and

wave conditions can make this extremely difficult, if not impossible; you could unexpectedly fall into water and the vessel (with the PFD aboard) could be unreachable; and, cold water can severely impede your ability to don and fasten a PFD in the water.

Never underestimate the protection a flotation device can afford you. It is called *lifesaving equipment* for a reason.



Buoyant heaving lines

On most pleasure craft, buoyant heaving lines no less than 15 m (49'3") in length are necessary equipment.



Lifebuoys

When buying a lifebuoy look for a Transport Canada approval sticker. Store this piece of equipment where it can be easily accessed in an emergency. Lifebuoys must be at least 610 mm in diameter. Smaller lifebuoys and horseshoe-type devices are not approved.



Reboarding devices

Pleasure craft greater than 12 m (39'4") in length, and pleasure craft 6-12 m (19'8"-39'4") in length with freeboard exceeding 0.5 m (1'8") need a reboarding device. If your pleasure craft has transom ladders

or swim platform ladders it already meets this requirement.

Boat safety equipment

Manual propelling device

A manual propelling device can mean:

- a set of oars;
- a paddle; or,
- any other apparatus that can be used manually (by hand or foot) by a person to propel a vessel, including pumping the rudder on small open sailboats or a paddle wheel on a paddle boat.

A spare paddle or other propelling device is a good idea, but only one is necessary to meet the requirement.

