

FIT FACTS

The first sign of a rookie boater is someone who is wearing a life jacket that doesn't fit! Choose a life jacket that fits properly.

- You don't want your life jacket too large or too small. **A snug fit is a proper fit.**
- Make sure the life jacket is properly fastened and all straps, buckles, and zippers are secure and accessible.
- Hold your arms straight over your head and ask a friend to grasp the tops of the arm openings and gently pull up. If it doesn't slip, it fits.



REMEMBER!

Life jackets for adults **do not** work for children.



The National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) was organized in September 1958. The NSBC serves as a national catalyst for developing a safe boating culture by providing educational resources, outreach programming, and training opportunities for industry partners and the boating community to influence safe, secure, and responsible boating.

National Safe Boating Council
8140 Flannery Court
Manassas, VA 20109
Phone: 703.361.4294

SAFEBOATINGCOUNCIL.ORG



Produced under a grant from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Reference to any specific commercial product, process, or service, or the use of any trade, firm or corporation name is for the information and convenience of the public, and does not constitute endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the U.S. Coast Guard.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT LIFE JACKET

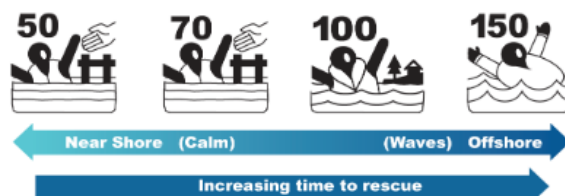


CHOOSE THE RIGHT LIFE JACKET

When choosing a new life jacket, you will see a new label on the inside of the device. Life jackets with the new labels are approved for use in the United States and Canada, whereas devices with the old labels continue to be approved in one country or the other, not both.

KNOW YOUR NEWTONS

The performance level is measured in newtons. A lower level number offers more mobility, comfort, and style with good flotation, and intended for near shore (calm water) activities. The higher level number offers greater flotation, turning, and stability in the water. These are intended for offshore activity, and when more time is needed in rescue situations.



NEAR SHORE, OFFSHORE, BE SURE!

Remember, time to rescue is important. If your boating activity is **near shore**, your life jacket may be rated at **50 newtons**. If you're boating **offshore**, you would consider a life jacket with a **150 newtons** rating. However, there are areas where you may be boating near shore when rescue is hours away and a higher level life jacket is needed.

WHAT IS A LIFE JACKET?

REQUIREMENTS

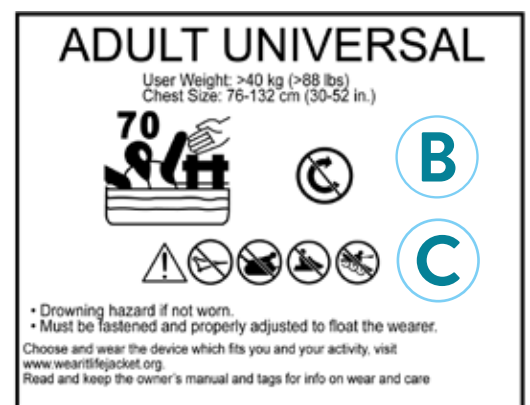
Most boaters know they're required to have a U.S. Coast Guard approved wearable life jacket on board for every person on their boat. Boating safety advocates recommend all boaters and passengers not only have a life jacket, but **wear it at all times while boating.**

TODAY'S OPTIONS

Modern life jackets are more comfortable, lightweight and stylish than the bulky orange style of the past. Life jackets that use inflatable technologies are cool and comfortable. They may resemble a pair of suspenders or a belt pack. Many inflate automatically when immersed in water.

READ THE LABEL

To choose a life jacket providing the right comfort and safety, you need to know how a life jacket works and how to read the label. Life jackets you may already own may have the old "type" life jacket label (Type I - Type V). This brochure explains the new life jacket label. The new label does not make obsolete life jackets with the old label (you can continue to use your life jacket as long as it is in good condition and appropriate for the activity).



Company Name Company Address Company website if available Made in XXXXX USCG Approved 180.084XXXXXX TC Approved XXXXXXXXX ANSI/CANUL 12492-5 Model: XXXX Style: XXXX Lot No: XXXX	Lab Certification Mark Certifying Lab Identification and address	Use: Fasten all closures and adjust for a snug fit. Inspection: Inspect your life vest before each outing. Do not use if your life vest shows signs of weathering, damage, or rot. Care and Storage: Dry thoroughly after each outing. Store in a dry, cool place out of direct sunlight.
---	---	---

A Approval information
All life jackets that are U.S. Coast Guard approved have an approval number—look for this number on the label to ensure your life jacket or buoyancy aid is U.S. Coast Guard approved to meet the law, and is safe.

B Turning unconscious person face up →
It is a misconception that if a life jacket is U.S. Coast Guard approved it will automatically turn a person face-up. This is NOT true. Select a life jacket with this icon on the label to ensure it will turn you face up, and then take to a pool or protected waters and test your life jacket.

C Towing sports →
Some life jackets are not approved for towing sports such as tubing, water skiing or wakeboarding.

Operating a Personal Watercraft (PWC) →
Some life jacket labels specify not approved for operating a Personal Watercraft.



WHICH LIFE JACKET IS RIGHT FOR ME?

Be honest about your swimming ability when selecting a life jacket. If you are a poor swimmer, you may opt for a higher performance level.



Boating offshore or in potentially rough water?

Offshore Life Jacket

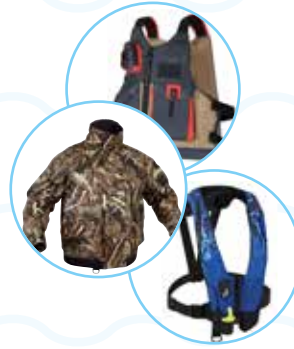
- Designed to turn an unconscious person face-up
- Brightly colored
- Higher newton rating for more buoyancy



Fishing? Hunting? In cold water?

Float Coat, Hunting or Fishing Vest

- Designed for comfort and range of motion
- Available in camouflage colors for waterfowl hunting
- Plenty of pockets



Boating with a child?

Any Style Suited for Activity

- Virtually all styles available are sized especially for children
- Many include additional safety features such as straps for pulling children from the water



Enjoying watercrafts or towing and water sports?

Vest

- Inherently buoyant
- Close fitting
- Multiple fasteners
- Brightly colored
- Designed for comfort and range of motion



Paddling or sailing on near-shore waters and in-land waterways?

Vest (or Inflatable)

- Designed for comfort
- Brightly colored
- Inherently buoyant
- Approved for the activity
- Selected for comfort



How about your four-legged friend?

Pet Harness

- A harness allows you to grab pet in the event of a submersion



WEAR IT

A program of the National Safe Boating Council



THERE ARE NO SEAT BELTS ON A BOAT

Accidents happen fast and allow for little time to reach and put on a stowed life jacket.



BE PREPARED

Boaters must have a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket on board for every person on their boat. Responsible boaters always wear their life jacket.

HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR LIFE JACKET



“THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT SELECTING A LIFE JACKET IS CHOOSING ONE YOU WILL WEAR.”

Peg Phillips, Executive Director
National Safe Boating Council

LIFE JACKETS CAN SERVE YOU FOR MANY YEARS IF THEY ARE PROPERLY STORED AND CARED FOR. YOU SHOULD:

- Use the life jacket for its intended purpose
- Dry life jackets completely after each use
- Hand wash with mild soap & water
- Store in a dry place when not boating
- Ensure the U.S. Coast Guard label is never removed and is legible

And, always refer to the label on your life jacket for specific maintenance requirements.

Serviceability

If your life jacket becomes torn or the buckles or zippers break, it's time to get a new life jacket. You should also replace your life jacket if it becomes waterlogged or smells of mildew.

Inflatables

Inflatable Life Jackets use compressed air, or CO₂ cartridges to inflate. Ensure you have the right cartridge for your jacket, check the cartridge for corrosion and always carry a spare rearming kit in the event of an unexpected inflation. Orally inflate to test that the jacket holds air for 16-24 hours.

NOTE ABOUT STATE LAWS

State laws vary, but real boaters always wear their life jacket.

On recreational boats underway, children under **13 years old** must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket unless they are below decks or in an enclosed cabin.

For more information, check with state marine law enforcement.

