

## Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection

### Life Jackets / Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

Most adults need an extra 7 to 12 pounds of buoyancy to keep their heads above water. A life jacket (PFD) can provide that "extra lift" to keep you afloat until help comes. Your weight isn't the only factor in how much "extra lift" you need. A person's body fat, lung size, clothing and the water conditions also play an important part.

There are different types and styles of life jackets.

- When selecting a life jacket (PFD), read the label to make sure it is for a person your size and weight.
- You also need to consider the type of boating and the area in which you will be boating.

Many boaters object to wearing traditional life jackets because they can be uncomfortable and hot. However, there are many US Coast Guard approved life jackets that are specific to an activity and inflatable life jacket (PFDs), which can be lightweight, comfortable, and provide the wearer with greater mobility and comfort.

Inflatables cannot be used by persons under 16 years of age, persons under 90 pounds, or for high speed water sports such as water-skiing or Personal Watercraft operation or riding. As with all life jackets (PFDs), be sure to read the label carefully to be certain that you are using it correctly



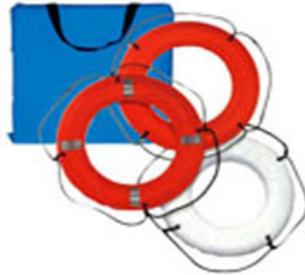
Type I  
Off-shore Life Jacket



Type II  
Near-shore Buoyant Vest



Type III  
Flotation Aid



Type IV  
Throwable Device



Type V  
Special Purpose

#### PFD Facts - Life Jackets Float....You Don't

- Type I and Type II tend to turn an unconscious person face up with Type I providing the most buoyancy. TYPE V may only be used for its special designated purpose. They must be worn to count.
- All life jackets **must** be United States Coast Guard approved and in good serviceable condition.

- All life jackets must be readily accessible. Better yet-wear yours!
- Buy the right size. A life jacket should not be able to be pulled up past the ears.
- Buy the right kind - will depend on the type of boating.
- Ski belts are not legal life jackets in Connecticut.

### Special PFD Requirements: Connecticut

During the period from October 1st through May 31st, all persons on board a manually propelled vessel must wear a Type I, II, III or V, U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device and no operator, or owner or user of a manually propelled vessel shall allow any person to be aboard who is not *wearing* such a device.

The operator or owner of any vessel being used for recreational purposes must require **any child twelve years of age and under** who is aboard such vessel to wear a personal flotation device while the vessel is underway unless the child is below deck or in an enclosed cabin.

### Trying Your Life Jacket

Try on your life jacket to see if it fits comfortably snug. Then test it in shallow water to see how it handles.

Tilt your head back. The life jacket should keep your chin above water so you can breathe easily.

### Caring for Your Life Jacket

Follow these points to be sure that your life jacket stays in good condition:

- If your life jacket doesn't fit, get one that does.
- Don't put heavy objects on your life jacket or use it for a kneeling pad or boat fender. Life jackets lose buoyancy when crushed.
- Let your life jacket drip dry thoroughly before putting it away. Always stow it in a well-ventilated place.
- Don't leave your life jacket on board for long periods of time when the boat is not in use.
- Never dry your life jacket on any direct heat source.
- Put your name on your life jacket if you're the only wearer.
- Practice throwing your Type IV PFD. Cushions throw best underhand.
- Service inflatables regularly as required.