

Lifejackets vs. Personal Flotation Devices

A lifejacket is the best insurance you can have - so find one that suits your needs and wear it!

80% of people who drown in recreational boating incidents are not wearing a lifejacket. Even if you have one on board, conditions like rough winds and waves and cold water can make it really hard, if not impossible, to find it and put it on. Worse yet, if you unexpectedly fall into the water, the boat (with your lifejacket on board) could be too far away to reach. Although you can choose between lifejackets and PFDs, keep in mind that lifejackets offer a higher level of protection. Cushions are not approved as safety equipment on any boat.

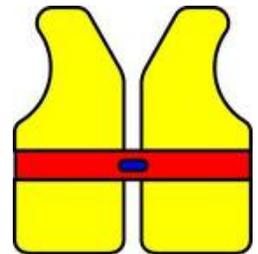
To find a list of all Canadian-approved lifejackets and PFDs, check out the *Approved Products Catalogue Index* at www.tc.gc.ca.

Lifejackets

Lifejackets come in red, orange or yellow.

This makes you much easier to see in the water.

Right now there are three Canadian-approved lifejacket types to choose from:



	SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA (SOLAS) LIFEJACKETS	STANDARD TYPE LIFEJACKETS	SMALL VESSEL LIFEJACKETS
Performance in the Water	Best Performance – Will turn you on your back in seconds to keep your face out of the water, even if you are unconscious	Slower Performance – Will turn you on your back to keep your face out of the water, even if you are unconscious	Slowest Performance – Will turn you on your back to keep your face out of the water, even if you are unconscious, but may do so more slowly
Sizes (by weight of person)	Available in 2 sizes: - Over 32 kg (70 lbs) - Less than 32 kg (70 lbs)	Available in 2 sizes: - Over 40 kg (88 lbs) - Less than 40 kg (88 lbs)	Available in 3 sizes: - Over 41 kg (90 lbs) - 18 kg (40 lbs) to 41 kg (90 lbs) - Less than 18 kg (40 lbs)
Models Available	Keyhole	Keyhole	Keyhole Vest

Future types and designs of lifejackets, including inflatables, that meet the new lifejacket standard adopted in 2007, will offer more comfort and better performance.



Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

PFDs are available in a wide range of approved types, sizes and colours.

PFDs are more comfortable than lifejackets because they are designed for constant wear.

They do not generally offer the same level of protection as lifejackets for:

- staying afloat; and
- turning you on your back so you can breathe.



1. Choose a PFD based on your needs and activity. If you plan to operate at high speeds, look for a PFD with three or more chest belts for security. If you will be boating in cold water (water less than 15°C), choose a PFD with some thermal protection. A large selection is also available for activities such as sailboarding, kayaking and canoeing. No matter what type of PFD you choose, you should choose a colour that makes you easy to see in the water.
2. There are many pros and cons to choosing a PFD over a lifejacket – but remember that a PFD may not turn you on your back if you fall in the water. The choice is yours, but think carefully before buying.
3. You can also buy inflatable PFDs, but you must understand how to use and care for them if they are to work properly. You must also understand which activities and conditions they are approved for. Above all, remember that you have to be **wearing** an inflatable PFD for it to be approved on an open boat. If the boat is not open then you only need to wear it while you're on deck or in the cockpit.

Inflatable PFDs are NOT approved for:

- anyone under 16 years old;
- anyone who weighs less than 36.3 kg (80 lbs);
- use on a personal watercraft; or
- white-water paddling activities.

Inflatable PFDs come in two styles:

- Vest types can be inflated orally, manually (with a CO₂ system) or automatically.
- Pouch types can be orally inflated or manually inflated by pulling a toggle to activate a CO₂inflation system.

Although these PFDs inflate quickly, for weak swimmers it can seem like it takes forever. All Canadian-approved inflatable PFDs have an oral inflation tube in case the CO₂ inflation system fails. This tube could be hard to use when you are trying to keep your head above water.

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

To learn more about choosing a lifejacket or PFD, visit www.wearalifejacket.com.