

Personal floatation device

This resource can help with the following areas:

- Stage 1: I know the importance of a personal floatation device (PFD).
- Stage 2: I can put on my own personal floatation device properly.
- Stage 3: I can put on my personal floatation device and adjust it properly.
- Stage 4: I know that there are different types of personal floatation devices.

Personal Floatation Device or PFD

A Personal Flotation Device is a jacket that when worn has with the ability to support a person's weight in the water. There are many types of Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) all designed to do a specific job. We will return to types of PFDs at the end of this issue.

When should we wear a Personal Flotation Device?

When sailing, we must wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD)/Lifejacket at all times - It's the LAW! It is covered under the Pleasure craft (Personal Flotation Devices and Operation) (safety) Regulations 2005 - Lifejacket Regulations. There must be suitable PFDs for everyone on board all pleasure craft.



A suitable PFD must be worn in the following situations;

- By anyone on board an open craft less than 7 meters in length.
- By anyone on deck on a craft less than 7 meters in length.
- By anyone under the age of 16 on board an open craft or on deck of any type of craft.
- By anyone being towed by another craft or on any other device (skis, donuts etc.).
- By anyone on a personal watercraft (Jet Ski/PWC).

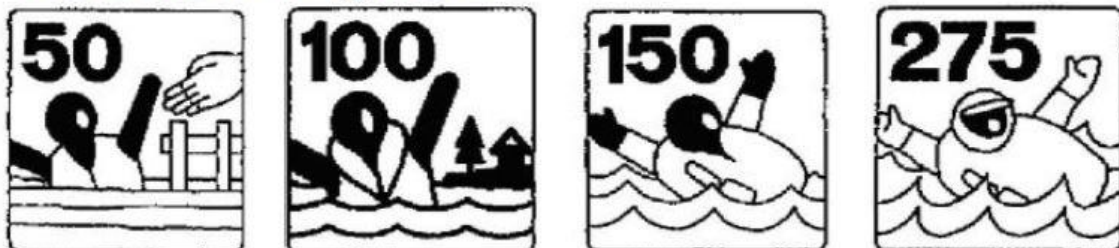
Except when;

- Tied up alongside or made fast to an; anchor, marina, pier or mooring.
- Immediately prior to, during and after swimming from a craft that is not moving through the water.
- Putting on, wearing or taking off diving equipment on a craft that is not moving through the water.

Classification of PFDs

All floatation garments must carry the CE mark of approval. All CE approved PFDs are classified by amount of buoyancy, measured in units called "Newtons".

ISO Label diagrams



50N Jacket – commonly called a buoyancy aid

- Assist a conscious person capable of self-help.
- The person must be a competent swimmer.
- Due to minimum bulk it is ideal for active water sports.
- Use of this garment should be restricted to sheltered inland waterways or safe enclosed inshore waters, with close support (including safety craft) and supervision. Examples include; dinghy training, sailing, open canoeing, rowing regattas and other such events.
- The 50N PFD is recommended by the Irish Sailing Association for use on sailing courses, unless otherwise specified.



100N Jacket

- Additional buoyancy for use in most general inshore activities.
- A reasonable assurance of safety in relatively calm waters.
- Not guaranteed to self-right an unconscious person or to protect the airway of an unconscious person in water.
- Suitable for swimmers and non-swimmers
- Fitted with retro-reflective stripes
- The most common type used in general Scout boating.



150N and above – also called a “lifejacket”

- Reasonable assurance of safety in all but the most severe conditions for a person not fully capable of self-help.
- May be designed to self-right an unconscious person who is wearing heavy waterproof clothing.
- Suitable for swimmers and non-swimmers
- Will fully support the person’s weight without assistance.

150N PFDs are available in four forms –

1. No permanent buoyancy- inflation by mouth.
2. No permanent buoyancy - manual inflation by gas cylinder.
3. No permanent buoyancy - automatic inflation on immersion.
4. Contains permanent buoyancy and may be inflated to full buoyancy level.

Permanent buoyancy amounts to about half the specified buoyancy level - they do not become "lifejackets" until fully inflated. 150N jackets should be worn uninflated to allow full and unrestricted movement. The decision to inflate lifejackets is made by the person in charge of the boat. Of these four sub-groups only jackets with permanent buoyancy are recommended for normal Scout use. Jackets with no permanent buoyancy, described (1, 2 and 3 above) are not recommended for normal Scout use.

275N Jacket

- High performance jacket for offshore use and severe conditions.
- This type of jacket would not normally be used in Scout boating.