

Prevention Update



SELECTION OF PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES AND LIFE JACKETS

Where there is a risk of drowning, you must wear a personal floatation device (PFD) or a life jacket at all times. Wearing a PFD can save your life if you fall overboard. The following information must be considered when choosing a suitable device as a form of personal protective equipment.

Size Selection

- Select a PFD or lifejacket that is comfortable, allows you to move freely, and will not restrict your movement while completing your work tasks. It should be snug with minimal movement. One size does not fit all.
- To ensure the best fit, wear similar clothes that you would for work when trying on the PFD or life jacket.

Buoyancy and Additional Requirements

- Your PFD or lifejacket must have a minimum buoyancy rating of 69 Newtons (15.5 lbs). Buoyancy rating is the amount of weight a PFD or life jacket is able to hold up beyond the amount that water naturally supports. Your device's buoyancy rating must be appropriate for both your weight and the amount of gear and clothing you are likely to have on.
- A device with a minimum buoyancy rating of 93 Newtons (21 lbs) should be used for people who work alone as they are designed to provide enough support for the head, neck and chest to turn an unconscious person face up in the water.
- Your PFD or lifejacket must have retroreflective strips, be made of highly visible material, and be fitted with a whistle.
- Ensure that your device has a permanent label or marking that shows it is approved by Transport Canada or any agency approved by Transport Canada.



Select an approved flotation device that will keep you afloat and is comfortable to work in.

If you have questions on this or any workplace safety topic, contact WCB Occupational Health & Safety at 902-368-5697 or toll free 1-800-237-5049, or visit our website at wcb.pe.ca.

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Proper Use and Storage

- Read the manufacturer's instructions for important information such as proper use, deflating the inflatable after use, rearming and repacking, specific maintenance, cleaning and storage.
- Prior to wearing your PFD or lifejacket, inspect it for damage. Replace the device if damaged.
- Wear your PFD or lifejacket over clothing to ensure proper inflation and visibility in the event you go overboard.
- Store PFDs or lifejackets in a location that is dry, easy to access, and out of direct sunlight.

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