



Immersion suits

An immersion suit is designed to save your life if you are forced to abandon ship because of a fire, flood, or other vessel emergency. Without protection, you can drown within a few minutes from the shock of entering cold water unexpectedly. Even if you survive the initial shock, you soon lose the ability to swim and keep your head above water. An approved immersion suit acts like your own personal life raft, keeping you afloat and keeping your body heat inside the suit and cold water out. It also provides a large bright target for rescuers.

Who is responsible for immersion suits?

The master of the vessel must:

- Make sure there is an immersion suit that meets a standard acceptable to WorkSafeBC readily available on board and in good condition for you and all other crew members (this does not apply to skiffs or punts working near the main vessel).
- Conduct emergency drills that include practicing putting on your immersion suit at least annually—at the start of the fishing season before leaving the dock, when there is a crew change, and at intervals to ensure that crew members are familiar with emergency procedures.

Your responsibilities are to:

- Check that your immersion suit meets a standard acceptable to WorkSafeBC.
- Know where your immersion suit is kept and how to wear it.
- Since it is your life that is at stake, you may choose to provide your own to ensure good quality, fit, and maintenance.
- Practice putting on your suit and participate in emergency drills.
- Regularly inspect it to make sure it fits properly and is in good working condition.
- Report any damage to the vessel master.
- Wear your immersion suit for abandoning ship.

An immersion suit that has not been properly maintained, or that has damaged seals or seams, does not meet a standard acceptable to WorkSafeBC.

Your immersion suit can only save your life if you use it.



Sample immersion suit



An immersion suit is designed to bring you to a face-up position within seconds.

For more information go to WorkSafeBC.com, OHS Regulation Parts 8 and 24.