



Personal flotation devices (PFDs) and lifejackets—selection

Wearing a PFD can save your life if you fall overboard. Your flotation device must be the right device for the job, and should also fit, be comfortable, and allow you to move freely while you work. It must also have a label or permanent marking showing it meets a standard acceptable to WorkSafeBC. The following are some important requirements when choosing a PFD or lifejacket.

Buoyancy rating

- Your PFD or lifejacket must provide a minimum buoyancy of 69 Newtons (15.5 pounds). A buoyancy rating is the amount of weight a PFD or lifejacket 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.
- If you are working alone, you must wear a self-righting PFD or lifejacket with a minimum of 93 Newtons (21 pounds) of buoyancy. Working alone means you are not in eyesight or earshot of another worker who is in a position to immediately come to your aid if you fall in the water.

Size

Your PFD or lifejacket must be the right size for you. If it is too large, it could slide off when you enter the water. Both chest size and weight will determine what size is right. To get the best fit in your PFD or lifejacket:

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for putting it on and tightening straps or other fastenings. It should feel snug but not uncomfortable.
- Next, have someone pull up on the shoulders. If the device moves up past your nose or head, try tightening the straps further. If it still moves up, it is too large.
- To get the best feel and fit, when trying on a PFD or lifejacket wear the clothes you would wear while working.
- If possible, test your PFD or lifejacket in a pool or shallow water to see how it works. If you are familiar with how it works, you are less likely to panic in an emergency.

Before you use a new PFD

- Read the manufacturer's instructions on topics such as proper use, deflating the inflatable after use, rearming and repacking, and specific maintenance, cleaning and storage.



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

<p>AUTOMATIC INFLATABLE PFD 123 Main Street, Anywhere, Canada Model # 12345 ADULT – UNIVERSAL Approved for use by adults at least 16 years of age weighing more than 36.3 kg Designed for chest size 76 to 132 cm Manufactured by ABC Corporation in September 2008 Lot Number 12345 to conform to standard UL1180 with Canadian Addendum Buoyancy, 150 N minimum (35 pounds force) Department of Transport (Canada) approved Approval No. TC-57298-06</p>

Sample label for a PFD