# Think Safe

# Choose the Right Personal Flotation Device (PFD)

**This package contains a Near-Shore Buoyant Vest (Type II PFD).** Other available types are described within.

## A Near-Shore Buoyant Vest (Type II PFD) —

- ☐ Will turn some unconscious wearers face-up in water.
- ☐ Sizes: Infant, child-small, child-medium, and adult.
- ☐ Compromise between Type I PFD performance and wearer comfort.

### Intended Uses

- ☐ General boating activities.
- ☐ Good for calm, inland waters, or where there is a good chance for fast rescue.

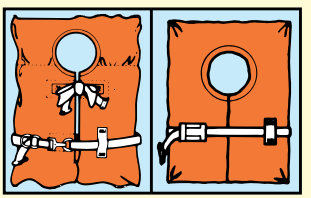
### Advantages

- ☐ More comfortable to wear than a Type I PFD.
- ☐ Keeps most unconscious wearers face-up in water.

### Disadvantages

- ☐ May be uncomfortable after wearing for extended periods.
- ☐ Will not turn as many people face-up as a Type I PFD will.
- ☐ In rough water, a wearer's face may often be covered by waves.
- ☐ Not for extended survival in rough water.

**PLEASE READ IMPORTANT MESSAGE ON THE BACK FOR INFANT DEVICES**



NOTE: Do not remove this booklet. No person may sell or offer for sale a PFD unless this booklet is provided with it.

# Do Not Attach PFDs To Boat!

Each PFD has straps, hooks, buckles, or other means for securing the device in place on the wearer. Some PFDs also incorporate decorative D-rings or tabs. Such items are not to be used to attach the device to the boat. Attaching the device to the boat will not permit it to perform as intended.

# How Many PFDs Do You Need?

The United States Coast Guard* says you must have USCG *approved* Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) on your recreational boat. How many and what type PFDs you'll need depends on the number of people on board, the size and type of your boat, and the kind of boating you do.

You must have one of any of these wearable PFDs for each person on board:

☐ Off-Shore Life Jacket (Type I PFD).
☐ Near-Shore Buoyant Vest (Type II PFD).
☐ Flotation Aid (Type III PFD).
☐ Special Use Device (Type V PFD).

Additionally, if your boat is 16 feet or longer, and is not a canoe or kayak, you must also have at least one:

☐ Throwable Device (Type IV PFD).

For example, if there are four people on your 16-foot boat, you must have at least five PFDs–four wearable PFDs and one throwable PFD.

# The Right PFD For You

PFDs come in a variety of shapes, colors, and materials. Some are made to be more rugged and last longer. Some are made to protect you from cold water. But no matter which PFD you choose, be sure to get one that's right for you and the water conditions you expect to encounter. Remember, spending a little time now can save you a lifetime later. Always look for the United States Coast Guard approval number on any PFD you buy.

* U.S. Coast Guard Regulation Title 33, Chapter 1, Part 175, Subpart B.

# Off-Shore Life Jacket (Type I PFD)

Best for open, rough or remote water, where rescue may be slow coming.

## Advantages

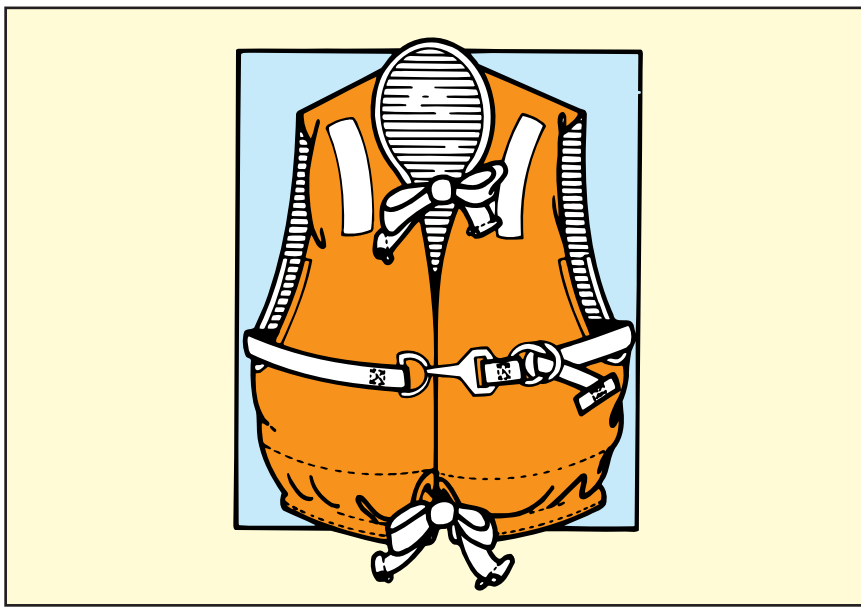
- ☐ Floats you the best.
- ☐ Turns most unconscious wearers face-up in water.
- ☐ Highly visible color.

## Disadvantages

- ☐ Bulky.

## Sizes

- ☐ Two sizes to fit most children and adults.



# Near-Shore Buoyant Vest (Type II PFD)

Good for calm, inland water, or where there is good chance of fast rescue.

## Advantages

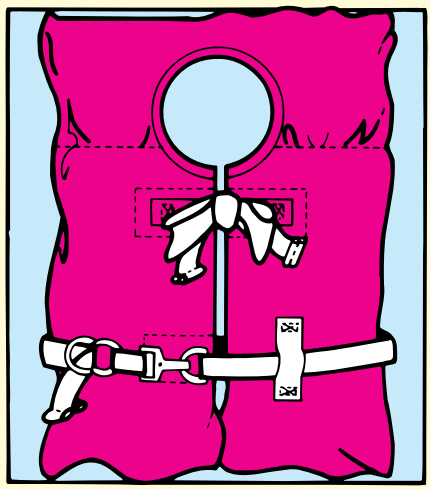
- ☐ Turns some unconscious wearers face-up in water.
- ☐ Less bulky, more comfortable than Off-Shore Life Jacket (Type I PFD).

## Disadvantages

- ☐ Not for long hours in rough water.
- ☐ Will not turn some unconscious wearers face-up in water.

## Sizes

- ☐ Infant, Child-Small, Child-Medium, and Adult.



# Flotation Aid (Type III PFD)

Good for calm, inland water, or where there is good chance of fast rescue.

## Advantages

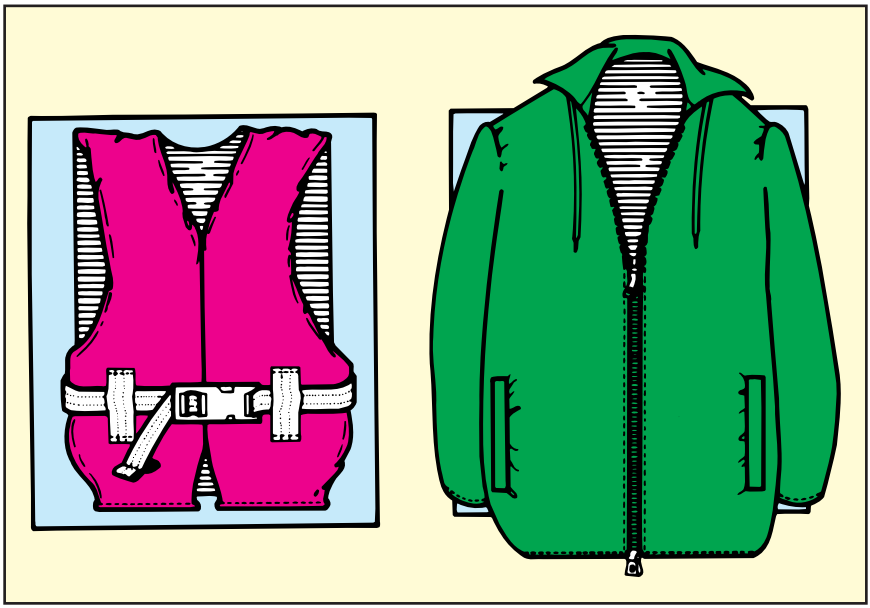
- ☐ Generally the most comfortable type for continuous wear.
- ☐ Designed for General Boating or the activity that is marked on the device.
- ☐ Available in many styles, including vests and flotation coats.

## Disadvantages

- ☐ Wearer may have to tilt head back to avoid going face-down.
- ☐ In rough water, a wearer's face may often be covered by waves.
- ☐ Not for extended survival in rough water.

## Sizes

- ☐ Many individual sizes from Child-Small through Adult.



# Throwable Device (Type IV PFD)

For calm, inland water with heavy boat traffic,where help is always nearby.

## Advantages

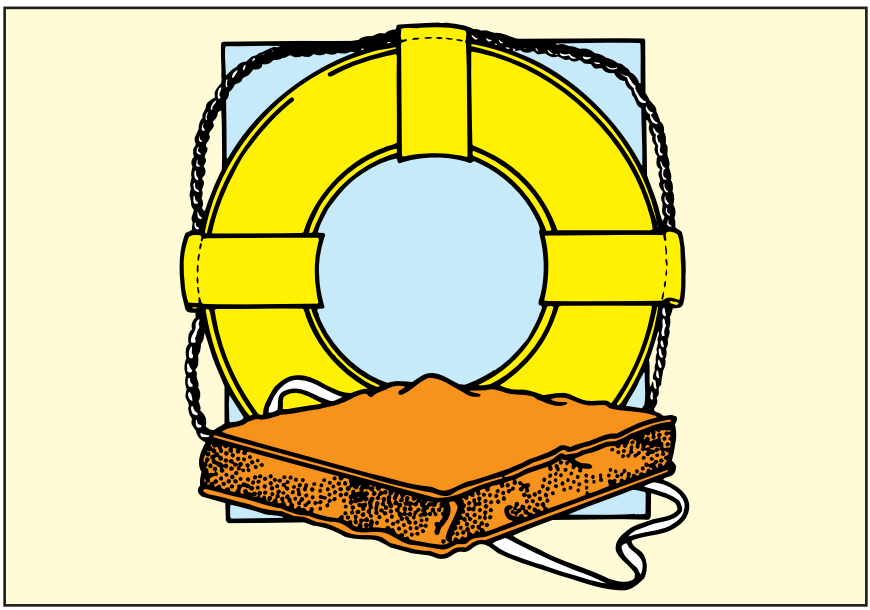
- ☐ Can be thrown to someone.
- ☐ Good back-up to wearable PFDs.
- ☐ Some can be used as seat cushion.

## Disadvantages

- ☐ Not for unconscious persons.
- ☐ Not for nonswimmers or children.
- ☐ Not for many hours in rough water.

## Kinds

- ☐ Cushions, ring, and horseshoe buoys.



# Special Use Devices (Type V PFD)

- ☐ Only for special uses or conditions.
- ☐ See label for limits of use.
- ☐ Varieties include boardsailing vests, deck suits, work vests, hybrid PFDs, and others.

**Advantages**

- ☐ Made for specific activities.

## Type V Hybrid Inflatable Device

Required to be worn to be counted as a regulation PFD.

**Advantages**

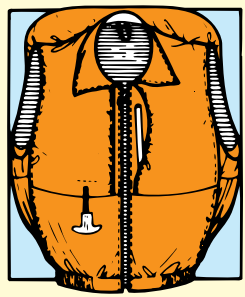
- ☐ Least bulky of all types.
- ☐ High flotation when inflated.
- ☐ Good for continuous wear.

**Disadvantages**

- ☐ May not adequately float some wearers unless partially inflated.
- ☐ Requires active use and care of inflation chamber.

**Performance Level**

- ☐ Equal to either Type I, II, or III performance as noted on the label.



*Inflated Hybrid*

# Be Safe — Wearing PFDs

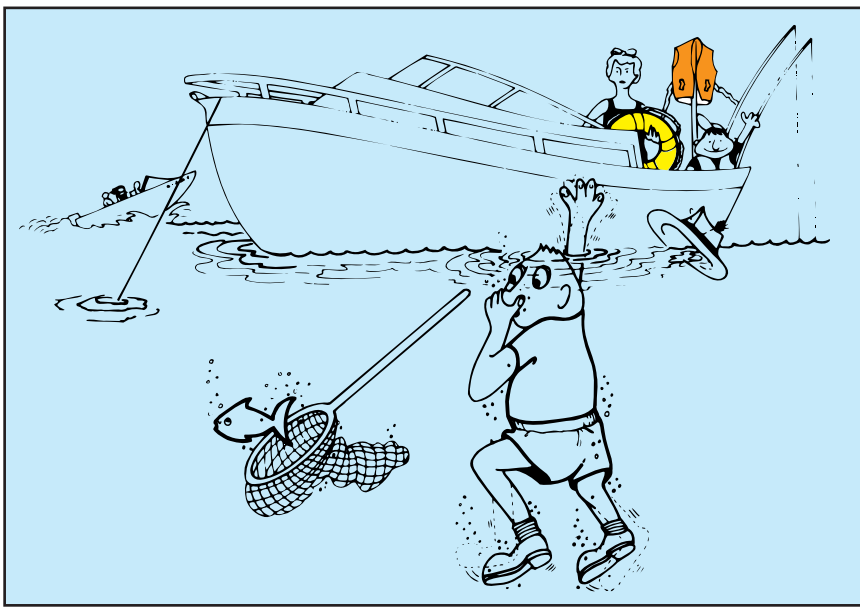
## Beat the Odds - Choose the Right PFD and Wear It

Most drownings occur way out at sea, right? Wrong! Fact is, 9 out of 10 drownings occur in inland waters, most within a few feet of safety. Most of the victims owned PFDs, but they died without them. A wearable PFD can save your life, if you wear it.

If you haven't been wearing your PFD because of the way it makes you look or feel, there's good news. Today's PFDs fit better, look better, and are easy to move around in. A PFD with bright colors is easier to see and may increase your chances of rescue.

One more thing. Before you shove off, make sure all on board are wearing PFDs. To work best, PFDs must be worn with all straps, zippers, and ties fastened. Tuck in any loose strap ends to avoid getting hung-up.

**When you don't wear your PFD, the odds are against you. You're taking a chance on your life.**



## Staying on Top

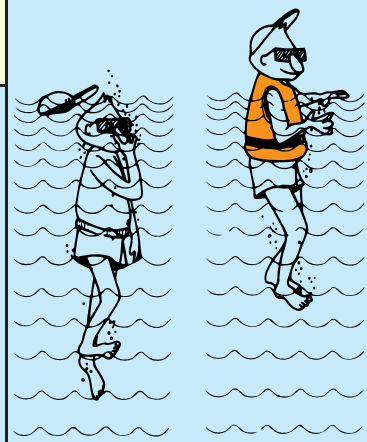
Most adults only need an extra seven to 12 pounds of buoyancy to keep their heads above water. A PFD can give that "extra lift," and it's made to keep you floating until help comes. But a PFD is a *personal* flotation device and it's important to get the right one for you.

Your weight isn't the only factor in finding out how much "extra lift" you need in water. Body fat, lung size, clothing, and whether the water is rough or calm, all play a part in staying on top. In general, the more physically fit you are, the more "lift" you need.

Read the label on your PFD to be sure it's made for people your weight and size. Test it as shown in the next section. Then in an emergency, don't panic. Relax, put your head back and let your PFD help you come out on top.

**HIGHER BUOYANCY MEANS HIGHER LIFT**

| Type PFDs | Minimum Adult Buoyancy (Pounds) |
|---|---|
| I | 22.0 |
| II | 15.5 |
| III | 15.5 |
| IV Ring Buoys | 16.5 |
| IV Boat Cushions | 18.0 |
| V Hybrids | 22.0 (fully inflated)<br>7.5 (deflated) |
| V Special Use Device | 15.5 to 22.0 |



## Trying Your PFD

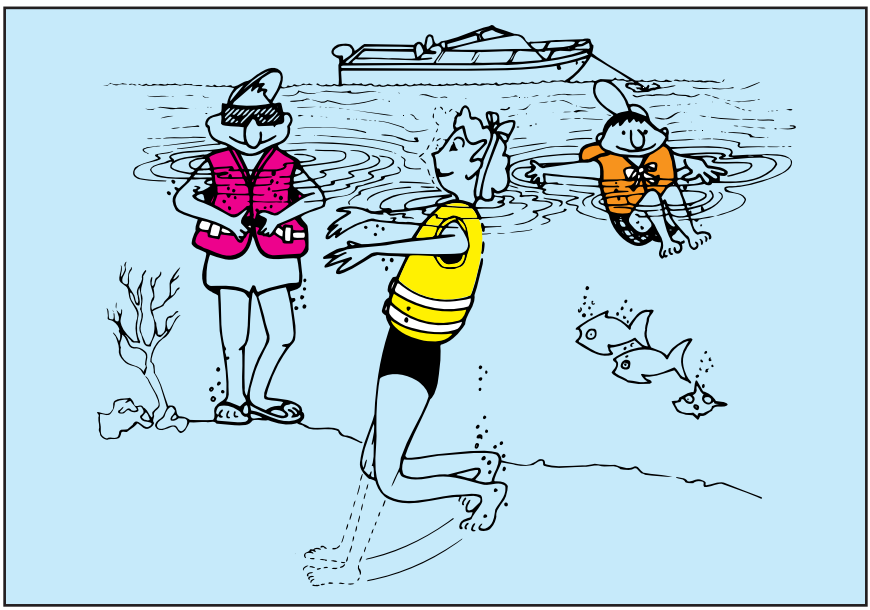
Try on your PFD to see if it fits comfortably snug. Then test it in shallow water to see how it handles.

To check the buoyancy of your PFD in the water, relax your body and let your head tilt back. Make sure your PFD keeps your chin above water and you can breathe easily.

Be aware: your PFD may not act the same in swift or rough water as in calm water. The clothes you wear and the items in your pockets may also change the way your PFD works.

If your mouth is not well above the water, get a new PFD or one with more buoyancy.

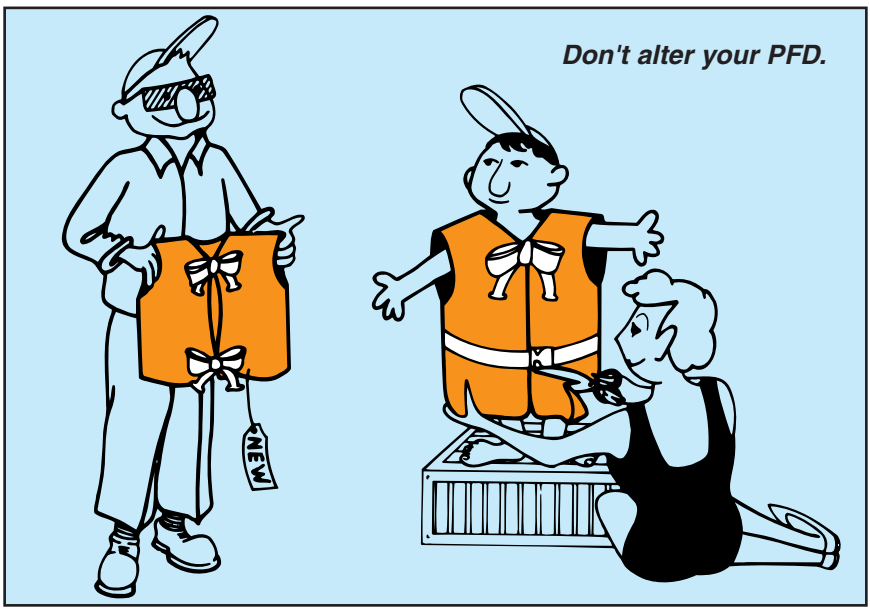
A PFD is designed not to ride-up on the body when in the water. But, when a wearer's stomach is larger than the chest, ride-up may occur. Before use, test this PFD in the water to establish that excessive ride-up does not impair PFD performance.



## Caring for your PFD

Follow these points to be sure your PFD stays in good condition:

1. Don't alter your PFD. If yours doesn't fit, get one that does. Play it safe. An altered PFD may not save your life.
2. Don't put heavy objects on your PFD or use it for a kneeling pad or boat fender. PFDs lose buoyancy when crushed.
3. Let your PFD drip dry thoroughly before putting it away. Always stow it in a well-ventilated place.
4. Don't leave your PFD on board for long periods when the boat is not in use.
5. Never dry your PFD on a radiator, heater, or any other direct heat source.
6. Put your name on your PFD if you're the only wearer.
7. Practice throwing your Type IV PFD. Cushions throw best underhand.



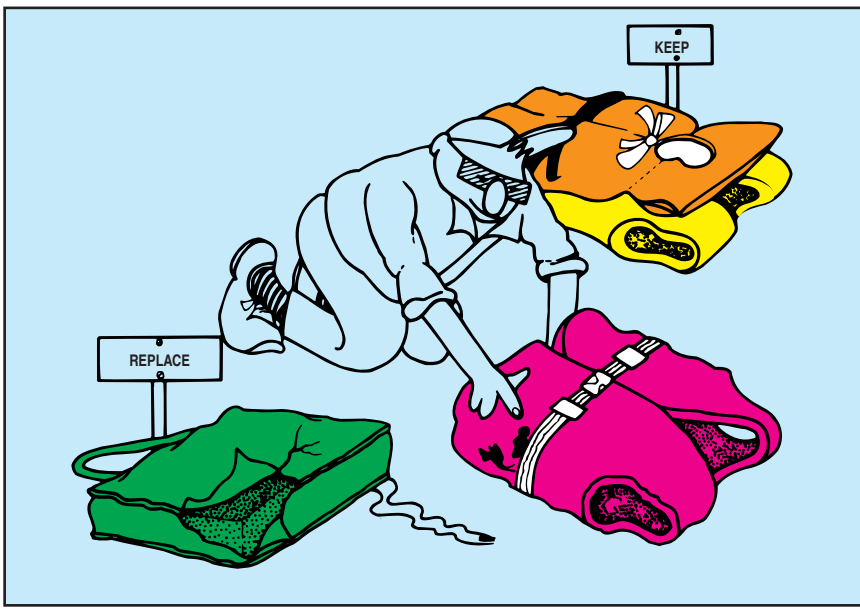
## Checking Your PFD

Check your PFD often for rips, tears, and holes, and to see that seams, fabric straps, and hardware are okay. Give your PFD belts and tie tapes a quick, hard pull to make sure they are secure. There should be no signs of waterlogging, mildew odor, or shrinkage of the buoyant materials.

If your PFD uses bags of kapok (a naturally buoyant material), gently squeeze the bag to check for air leaks. If it leaks, it should be thrown away. When kapok gets wet, it can get stiff or waterlogged and can lose some of its buoyancy.

Fading can indicate loss of strength. Store your PFD in a dry, cool, dark place. A weathered PFD could tear easily, resulting in loss of flotation material. If faded, check strength or throw the PFD away and buy a new one.

Don't forget to test each PFD at the start of each season. Remember, the law says your PFDs must be in good shape before you use your boat. Ones that are not in good shape should be cut up and thrown away.



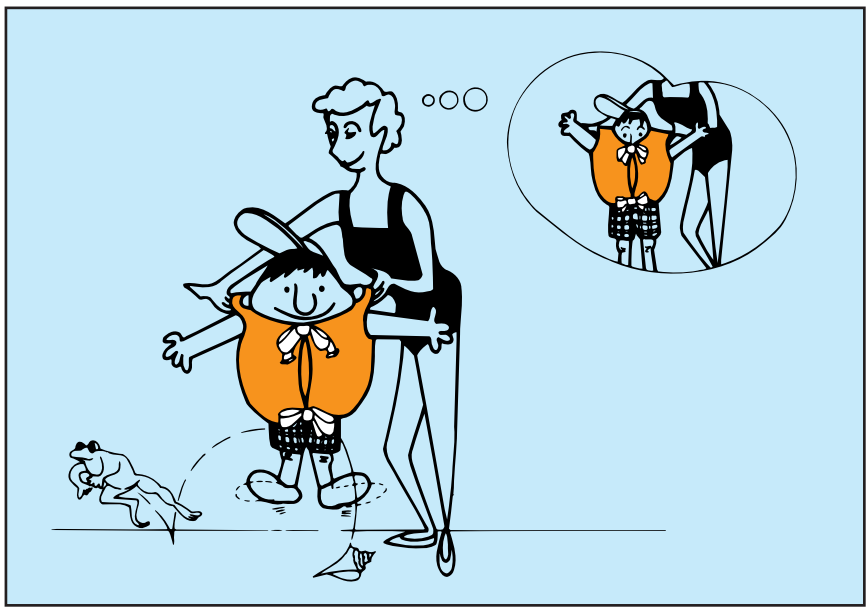
## Teach Your Children Well

Children panic when they fall into the water suddenly. This causes them to move their arms and legs violently, making it hard to float safely in a PFD. A PFD will keep a child afloat, but may not keep a struggling child face-up. That's why it's so important to teach children how to put on a PFD and to help them get used to wearing one in the water.

To work right, a PFD must fit snugly on a child. To check for a good fit, pick the child up by the shoulders of the PFD. If the PFD fits right, the child's chin and ears will not slip through.

PFDs are not babysitters. Even though a child wears a PFD when on or near the water, an adult should always be there, too. Parents should remember that inflatable toys and rafts should not be used in place of PFDs.

While some children in the 30–50 pound weight range who can swim may like the extra freedom of movement that a Flotation Aid (Type III PFD) provides, most children in this weight range, especially those who can't swim, should wear a Near Shore Buoyant Vest (Type II PFD).

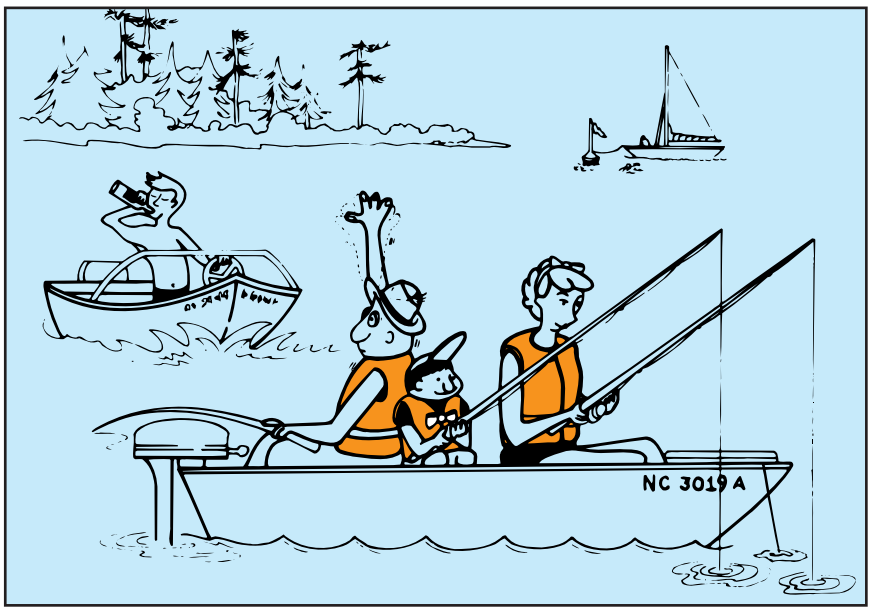


## Skipper — Skip the Drink

Alcohol slows you down and keeps you from thinking clearly. Don't drive if you've been drinking.

As many as 80 percent of boating accidents involve alcohol. Drive your boat defensively. Watch out for others who have been drinking. They're accidents waiting to happen.

Alcohol works to lower your body temperature faster when you're in the water. If you've been drinking, you will not survive as long in cold water.



## The Cold Facts

Be aware that cold water (less than 70 degrees F) can lower your body temperature. This is called hypothermia. If your body temperature goes too low, you may pass out and then drown. Even if you're wearing a PFD, your body can cool down 25 times faster in cold water than in air.

Water temperature, body size, amount of body fat, and movement in the water all play a part in cold water survival. Small people cool faster than large people. Children cool faster than adults.

But PFDs can still help you stay alive longer in cold water. They let you float without using energy and they protect part of your body from cold water. A snug-fitting PFD is better than one that's loose-fitting. When you boat in cold water, use a flotation coat or deck-suit style PFD. In cold water they're better than vests because they cover more of your body.

**HOW HYPOTHERMIA AFFECTS MOST ADULTS**

| Water Temperature (Degrees Fahrenheit) | Exhaustion or Unconsciousness | Expected Time of Survival |
|---|---|---|
| 32.5 | Under 15 min. | Under 15 to 45 min. |
| 32.5 to 40 | 15 to 30 min. | 30 to 90 min. |
| 40 to 50 | 30 to 60 min. | 1 to 3 hrs. |
| 50 to 60 | 1 to 2 hrs. | 1 to 6 hrs. |
| 60 to 70 | 2 to 7 hrs. | 2 to 40 hrs. |
| 70 to 80 | 2 to 12 hrs. | 3 hrs. to indefinite |
| Over 80 | Indefinite | Indefinite |

## Cold Water Survival

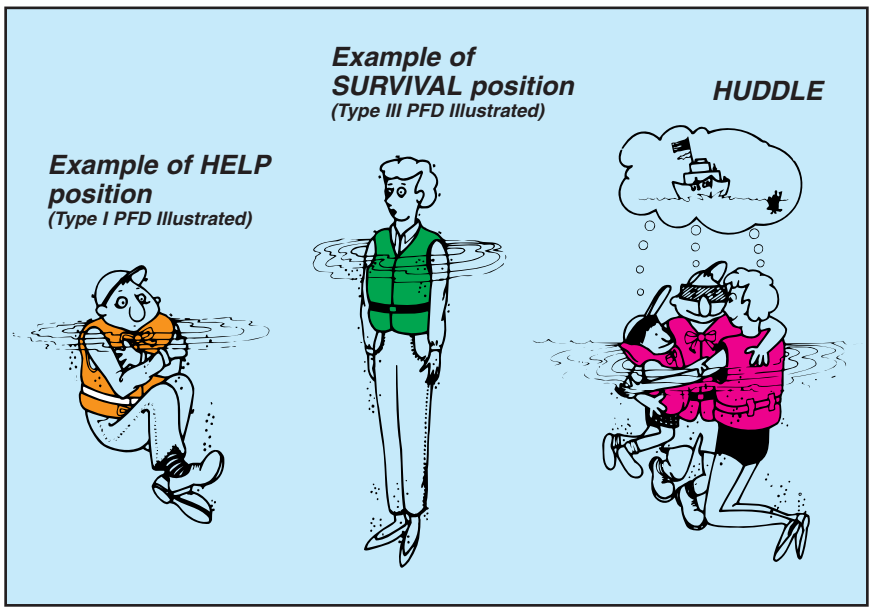
When you're in cold water, don't swim unless you can reach a nearby boat, fellow survivor, or floating object. Even good swimmers drown while swimming in cold water. Swimming lowers your body temperature.

If a nearby floating object is large, pull yourself up on it. The more your body is out of the water, the warmer you'll be. Don't use drownproofing methods that call for putting your face in the water. Keep your head out of the water to lessen heat loss and increase survival time.

Use of the HELP position will lessen heat loss. However, if you're wearing a Type III PFD, or if the HELP position turns you face down, bring your legs together tight and your arms tight to your sides and your head back. See SURVIVAL position.

If there are others in the water, HUDDLE together for warmth. Keep a positive outlook. It will improve your chances of survival.

Always wear your PFD. Even if you become helpless from hypothermia, your PFD will keep you afloat.



## Remember — Safe Boating is No Accident

Keep this pamphlet in a convenient spot on your boat. Read it often.

If you need more information about PFDs and safe boating, contact your state boating authority, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, U.S. Power Squadron, Red Cross, or your nearest unit of the U.S. Coast Guard. To find out about free boating courses in your area call 1-800-336-BOAT (in Virginia, call 800-245-BOAT).

## IMPORTANT MESSAGE—PLEASE READ NOW

Since children come in many sizes and shapes, the U.S. Coast Guard and this PFD manufacturer urge that this device be tested immediately after purchase. Check for proper weight range, comfortable fit, and especially stable face-up position in the water.

A child is difficult to float in a face-up position because of the distribution of body weight and a child's tendency to struggle or attempt to climb out of the water. Some children float best in one style of vest, while others will float better in another. If one does not work well, try another style.

**Remember: *Never* leave children unattended in water even if they have a personal flotation device on.**

## PFD Checklist

**When you're on or near the water and you're ready to wear your PFD, ask yourself the following questions:**

- ☐ **Have you read this pamphlet to increase your chances of survival?**
- ☐ **Have you selected the proper PFD?**
- ☐ **Does your PFD fit and is it the right size according to the label?**
- ☐ **Have you trial tested your PFD in shallow water?**
- ☐ **Does your PFD keep your chin above water and can you breathe easily?**
- ☐ **If you're a boat operator, have you checked the PFDs for your passengers?**

RECYCLABLE PAPER

Litho in USA 7.2016