

## BOATING CLASSES

Oregon's new mandatory boater education program is now being phased in. It will eventually require all people operating powerboats greater than 10 hp to take an approved boater education course and carry a boater education card. Beginning in 2003, no one under the age of 12 may operate a powerboat of any size. The chart at right shows the age-based phase-in.

Year	Your Age
2003	30 and younger
2004	40 and younger
2005	45 and younger
2006	50 and younger
2007	60 and younger
2008	70 and younger
2009	All boaters

For a listing of available classroom and online courses, please contact the Marine Board at (503) 378-8587 or check the listing at [www.boatoregon.com](http://www.boatoregon.com).

### State Marine Board

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# Life Jackets & Water: A Mix For Life



[www.boatoregon.com](http://www.boatoregon.com)



# LIFE JACKETS (PFDs)

A life jacket, or personal flotation device (PFD), can save your life if you wear it.

In Oregon, 85 percent of the people who drown in boating accidents would have survived had they worn life jackets.

## STATE LAW

No person shall operate a boat on Oregon waters with a child age 12 and under unless the child is wearing a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD)/life jacket, of the appropriate size, while the boat is underway. Children on an open deck or cockpit of sailboats, motorized and non-motorized vessels (canoes, kayaks, rafts) underway must wear a life jacket at all times.

### Exceptions:

- While child is below deck, or in an enclosed cabin of a boat.
- When the child is on a sailboat and tethered by lifeline or harness that is attached to the sailboat.
- When the child is on a U.S. Coast Guard-inspected passenger-carrying vessel operating in navigable waters of the U.S.

## CARRIAGE REQUIREMENTS

The number and type of life jackets you are required to carry depends on boat length and the number of persons on board.

- **Boats less than 16 feet in length**, and canoes and kayaks of any length, must carry one wearable Type I, II or III for each person on board, including water skiers. Under the new law, a water skier age 12 and under must wear a life jacket at all times.
- **All boats 16 feet or longer**, must carry one Type I, II, III or V for each person on board and one Type IV throwable in each boat.
- **A Type V PFD** may be carried instead of any required PFD, but not on personal watercraft, and only if the Type V is approved for the activity for which the boat is being used. Most Type Vs must be worn to meet the carriage requirements.
- **Anyone operating or riding a personal watercraft** (Jet Skis, Wave Runners) must wear a Type I, II or III life jacket.
- **A water skier must wear a PFD** or have one on board the tow boat.

## RECOMMENDED USE

Infants, children and non-swimmers should wear life jackets at all times while on docks and other places near open water (ponds, lakes, creeks, rivers, pools).

When boating in cold water, life jackets should be worn at all times. Cold water can numb extremities and limit reflexes quickly, making it difficult to put on a life jacket. Because Oregon waters are extremely cold, it is very important to protect yourself against hypothermia.

## TYPES OF LIFE JACKETS AND HOW THEY'RE USED:

### Type I Life Preserver



This device is intended for use offshore, in open or coastal waters, or potentially rough seas where a quick rescue may not be likely.

Type I preservers have greater flotation than other life jackets; they are designed to turn most unconscious wearers in the water to a face-up position.

### Type II Buoyant Vest



This vest is designed for calm, inland water or where there is a good chance of a quick rescue. Less buoyant than a Type I, this device will turn some unconscious wearers to a face-up position but not as consistently as a Type I. It is not suitable for extended survival in rough or cold water.

### Type III Marine



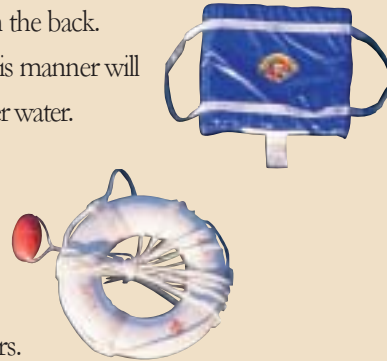
This is a buoyant device suitable for conscious users in calm, inland water, or where there is a good chance of a quick rescue.

A Type III is designed so wearers can place themselves in a face-up position. The wearer may have to tilt his or her head back to avoid turning face down in the water. The Type III has the same buoyancy as a Type II, but is more wearable for various activities.

### Type IV Throwable Device

This type is designed to be thrown to someone overboard. A Type IV, cushion or ring buoy, should never be worn on the back. Using these devices in this manner will force a wearer's face under water.

A Type IV is of little use to an unconscious or exhausted person and is not recommended for children or non-swimmers.



### Type V Special Purpose Devices

Type V devices are designed and approved for specific activities and may be carried instead of another life jacket only if used according to approved conditions on its label. Some devices provide significant hypothermia protection.



### Infant/Child Life Jackets

An infant or child life jacket should have a crotch strap, which helps keep the life jacket on; an oversized float collar, which keeps the head out of the water; and a grab loop, which makes plucking a youngster out of the water easier.



### Inflatables (CO<sub>2</sub>)

There are many inflatable devices available to the recreational boater. They may be more comfortable to wear, however they require the user to pay careful attention to the condition of the device. Currently, they are not allowed to be used by children under the age of 16. Read the label for applicability.

### Hybrid (Foam and Inflation)

A hybrid contains built-in flotation and an inflatable chamber. When fully inflated, its performance is equal to that of a Type I, II or III life jacket. To meet PFD carriage requirements, most hybrids need to be worn.

The U.S. Coast Guard has approved fully inflatable life jackets that meet carriage requirements for recreational boats. Compact and comfortable, they are worn as a belt pack or as suspenders.

**Note: Both hybrid and inflatable life jackets must be inspected in accordance with the instructions on the label. Some hybrids and inflatables utilize CO<sub>2</sub> cartridges which need to be tested regularly. Expended cartridges need to be replaced.**

### COAST GUARD APPROVAL



**Check the PFD label for restrictions and limitations on its use and performance type.**

Life jackets must be Coast Guard approved and the right size for the wearer.

Coast Guard approval is shown by a stencil marking or tag on the PFD. The marking or tag shows the amount of flotation in the device and the PFD type.

If your PFD or life jacket is damaged, it no longer meets legal requirements. Check your jackets yearly for buoyancy, rips, rust and rot.

### CHECK FOR PROPER FIT

Use the "touchdown test" to check if a life jacket fits.

With the jacket on, raise your arms as though signaling a touchdown. If when looking to the left, right and over the shoulder, the chest part of the jacket doesn't hit the chin, the device probably fits.

A good test for children is to have a child stand normally, arms at sides. Grab the life jacket at the shoulders and firmly lift up. If you can move the life jacket more than three inches up and down the child's body, it doesn't fit.

A life jacket that doesn't fit could endanger the wearer as much as not wearing one.

