

The Tool Box

Boats

Most people use boats for recreation. We use boats to do our jobs. The types of boats we use are as varied as the tasks for which we use them. Our officers use fast boats for



photo-Art Michaels

patrolling our waterways. Our biologists use open, stable boats as work platforms to study



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fish. Our boating safety trainers use canoes to teach water rescue and safety. In short, boats are tools we use every day.



photo-PPBC file

Water Safety Choosing a Life Jacket

Boating is a lot of fun. Being a safe boater lets you have more fun. The most important thing you can do is always wear your life jacket. If you fall out or the boat turns over, your jacket is designed to keep you afloat.

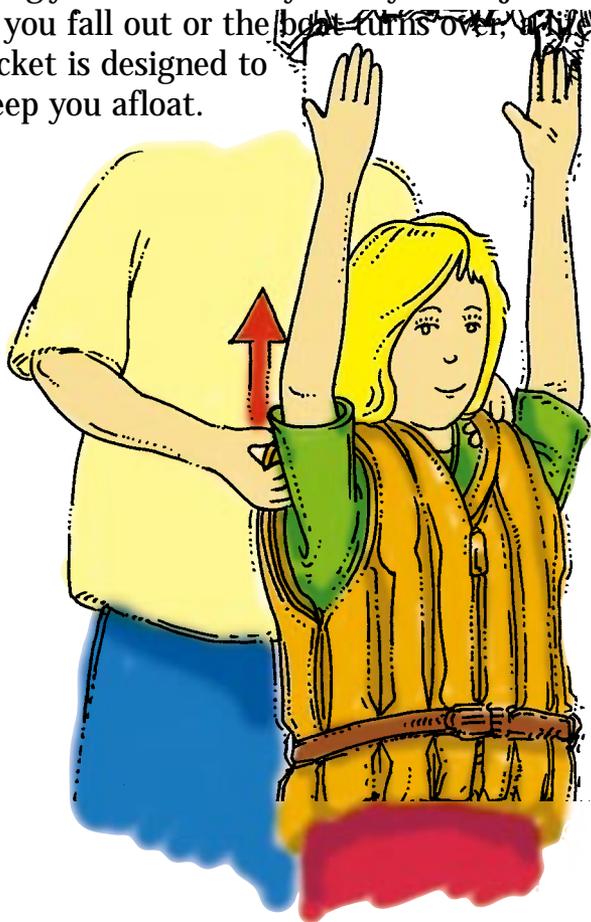


Illustration: Ted Walker



A life jacket is also called a personal flotation device, or PFD. If you go on boats often, you should have your own PFD. It is your **personal** piece of equipment. Life jackets come in a variety of colors and styles. Newer designs are comfortable to wear. Buy one that you will want to wear, and that is suited for your activities. Make sure your PFD is the right size. Your PFD should fit snugly so it won't come off in the water. The "touchdown test" is a good way to make sure it fits. Here's how to do it.

1. Put on your life jacket.
2. Raise your arms over your head as if you were signaling a touchdown.
3. Have someone lift your life jacket straight up by the shoulders.
4. The jacket should stay in place. If the zipper touches your nose or almost comes off, the jacket is too loose.