

The Best Way to Stay Afloat

The most important piece of safety equipment is a life jacket or personal flotation device (PFD). Wearing a life jacket on a boat is like wearing your seat belt in a car. If an accident happens, both could save your life. Life jackets, like seat-belts, only work when you wear them.

★ Life jackets come in all shapes, sizes and colors. There are five types of life jackets, based on use and purpose.



Type I - OFF-SHORE LIFE JACKET

Over 20 pounds of buoyancy, designed to turn an unconscious person face-up.

Type II - NEAR-SHORE BUOYANT VEST

Minimum 15.5 pounds of buoyancy, designed to turn an unconscious person face-up.



Type III - FLOTATION AID

Minimum 15.5 pounds of buoyancy, not designed to turn an unconscious person face-up; more comfortable for water sports.

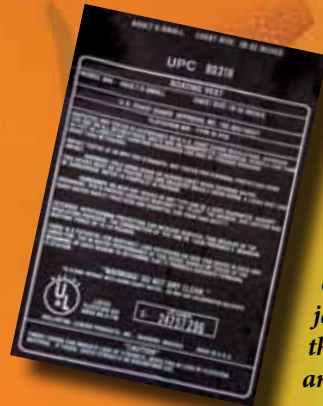
Type IV - THROWABLE DEVICE

Minimum 16.5 pounds of buoyancy, designed to be grasped, not worn.



Type V - SPECIAL-USE DEVICE

Must be used in accordance with any requirements on the approved label.



A label on the life jacket lists the size and type.



★ Make sure your life jacket fits properly. A life jacket that's too large will slip over your head. If it is too small, it may not keep you afloat. The more comfortable the jacket, the more likely you will wear it. You can check the fit by doing the touchdown test:

- 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 big.