

Life Jackets & Personal Flotation Devices: Old Vs New

There are many different designs of devices to assist a person floating in the water. The features they offer and where they are to be used influences how they are named.

Type System (US)

The old US Type classification system called everything a PFD, a Personal Flotation Device Type I through V. In Canada they distinguished between PFDs and life jackets (with turning ability).

Performance System (New US/Canada "Harmonized")

The new Performance Classification System refers to a numbered scale with Buoyancy Aids at the lower range and life jackets at the upper end. Recent improvements to standards for life jacket design, construction and testing have led to changes that will offer more choice to users.

Why The Change?

Canada and the United States have worked together to harmonize their life jacket standards to:

- improve safety choices and encourage innovation
- allow new approved devices to be used across borders
- expand markets and streamline regulations

Current / Old Labels - Legacy Devices

All current approved life jackets and PFDs (personal flotation devices) will continue to be legally approved for carriage if they are still in good condition, readily available and of the correct size to be worn for each person on board.

US approved devices are acceptable in the USA, and Transport Canada approved devices are acceptable in Canada.

New devices with new labels under the new performance classification system are acceptable in both countries. New devices tested to new standards will be phased in as introduced by manufacturers.

Currently approved devices will continue to be acceptable on board if they are in good condition. New devices available in stores will begin to have new labels, with clear information and icons indicating performance of the device in the water. Devices with new labels are approved for use in Canada and the United States. Devices with old labels continue to be approved in one country or the other, not both. Read the label.

Check with state and local authorities for specific PFD/life jacket requirements for both (Type I-V) and harmonized systems.

New Performance Level Label

**ADULT
UNIVERSAL**
User Weight: > 41kg (>90 lbs)
Chest Size: 76-132 cm (30-52 in.)

70








- Approved only when worn
- Drowning hazard if not worn.
- Must be fastened and properly adjusted to float the wearer.

Choose and wear the device which fits you and your activity, visit www.XXXXX.com*
Read and keep the owner's manual and tags for info on wear and care.

Company Name	Lab Certification Mark
Company Address	
Company website if available	Certifying Lab Identification and Address
Indication of Country of Origin	
USCG Approved 160.064/XXXXX	
ANSI/UL 1123- TYPE III	
Model:	
Lot No.	

Use:
Fasten all closures and adjust for a snug fit.
Inspection:
Inspect your life vest before each outing. Do not use if your life vest shows signs of weathering, damage, or rot.
Care and Storage:
Dry thoroughly after each outing.
Store in a dry cool place out of direct sunlight.



Old Type Level Label

MANUFACTURED BY Fabrica SA HELY F. NIKOVEN, 250 RUE CHAMON, INC. 301-1233 RIVERROCK AVE., RICHMOND, BC V6X 1K6		
U.S. NUMBER NUMBER 81-02		
To conform to Standard CAN/CSG-88-11 Adult Type I conforme au titre de norme CAN/CSG-88-11 Adult		
Subject to 16 CFR Part 161.10 (Child-Resistant) Potentiellement soumis à la norme 16 CFR 161.10		
THIS PFD IS DESIGNED TO BE WORN UNDER IT CE VETEMENT EST CONÇU POUR VOTRE GÉOLATTE, PORTÉZ-LE!		
Department of Transport, Canada, Approved Ministère des Transports, Canada, Approuvé Approval Number / No. d'approbation: TC-0879-07		
PERSONAL FLotation DEVICE CAUTION This device may lose buoyancy over a period of time and become no longer inflatable. Use of water performance should be checked regularly. Buffing each season to determine that it provides adequate buoyancy for your needs. Orange, red and yellow inflated PFDs are recommended for higher visibility.	 ADULT (and CHILD ADULT) 175 LB	VETEMENT DE FLUTATION INDIVIDUEL AVERTISSEMENT Ce vêtement peut perdre de sa flottabilité au cours du temps. Vérifiez régulièrement sa capacité de flottaison. Avant d'utiliser votre appareil, vérifiez que vous êtes capable de le gonfler. Vérifiez également régulièrement sa capacité de flottaison. Les V.P.F. de couleur orange, rouge ou jaune sont recommandés pour une meilleure visibilité.
WARNING: Shut-off or non-inflated inflation device if the product will influence the performance of the device. AVERTISSEMENT: Placer des dispositifs d'arrêt ou non dans votre appareil avant que cela n'influence sa performance. Ne gonflez pas le produit si cela n'est pas recommandé par le fabricant. (ET ARRÊTEZ, NE DÉTACHEZ PAS ET/OU ARRÊTEZ AU BATEAU)		Care instructions / Prendre bonne note des instructions d'entretien de votre produit. Ne gonflez pas le produit si cela n'est pas recommandé par le fabricant. (ET ARRÊTEZ, NE DÉTACHEZ PAS ET/OU ARRÊTEZ AU BATEAU)

Canada

USA

RECREATIONAL INFLATABLE - TYPE (A) PERSONAL FLotation DEVICE ADULT - [SIZE] USER WEIGHT: More Than 80 lbs. (36 kg) CHEST SIZE: [R]

USCG Approved for use only on recreational boats by persons at least 16 years of age. An owner's manual must be provided with this PFD. Not approved for use on personal watercraft, for white water paddling, or for water skiing, knee boating, or similar speed sports.

WARNING - DROWNING HAZARD:

- READ OWNER'S MANUAL BEFORE USE
- FOLLOW MANUFACTURER'S USE, CARE, AND MAINTENANCE INSTRUCTIONS
- DO NOT INFLATE THIS DEVICE TO FLOAT
- INFANTS OR NON-SWIMMERS SHOULD NOT USE THIS DEVICE UNLESS WORN INFLATED

WARNING - TO REDUCE THE RISK OF DEATH BY DROWNING:

- BEFORE DROWNING, CHECK THAT THE DEVICE IS PROPERLY ARMED AND PACKED BY ACCORDANCE WITH THE OWNER'S MANUAL, AND THAT A FULLY CHARGED CYLINDER OF THE TYPE SPECIFIED IS IN PLACE
- PERFORM SPINNING TEST EACH SEASON BEFORE USING THIS DEVICE
- CHOOSE THE RIGHT TYPE AND SIZE DEVICE AND WEAR IT - FASTEN ALL CLOSURES AND ADJUST FOR SNUG FIT
- DO NOT USE BELOW PRODUCE
- DO NOT REMOVE THE INFLATABLE CHAMBERS
- DO NOT FASTEN DEVICE TO BOAT

WARNING - INJURY HAZARD - DO NOT WEAR THIS DEVICE UNDER CLOTHING.

CAUTION - MANUAL/AUTOMATIC INFLATABLE PFDs MAY INFLATE UNEXPECTEDLY WHEN EXPOSED TO HIGH HUMIDITY OR OTHER SEVERE CONDITIONS.

CAUTION - THIS PFD REQUIRES REARMING AFTER EACH INFLATION. ALWAYS HAVE REARMING KITS TO SERVICE YOUR INFLATABLE PFDs.

MODEL: [C] STYLE: [S]
U.S. COAST GUARD APPROVAL NUMBER 160-##-#####

[Type Party
Certificate
Mark] U.S. COAST GUARD APPROVAL NUMBER 160-##-#####

[TRADEMARK
OR NAME,
AND ADDRESS] [LIFE RAFT]

PERFORMANCE LEVEL PFD CLASSIFICATIONS

SIZE



The size of the device is shown on the label, (usually near the back of the neck) stated as a measure of mass (weight). A chest measurement or height may also be indicated. The label is a general guideline only as body type and size vary greatly. Most devices are adjustable for GOOD FIT.

Try it on! Try it out in the water!

- Try on your device. Choose a GOOD FIT!
- Pay particular attention to GOOD FIT for children.
- DO NOT choose a size bigger for children to 'grow into'. This is dangerous as the device may come off over their head in the water.

WARNINGS



The warnings panel on the label includes important information for the user about the device and its intended use.

Icons are used to inform the user that a device may not be appropriate for certain activities, such as water-skiing, towed sports or personal watercraft. (Some jurisdictions may have regulations about what device design is required).

APPROVAL



The approval panel indicates that the device has been approved by the United States Coast Guard and Transport Canada.

Other important information includes:

- approval codes
- certification by testing laboratories
- manufacturer's name, contact info, device lot and model numbers

MAINTENANCE



The maintenance panel on the label includes information on the care and use of the device. Icons are used to inform the user about cleaning and drying the device. Reminders about fastening the device for GOOD FIT and the importance of inspecting for damage before use and storage are included here, with reference as well to reading manufacturers information.

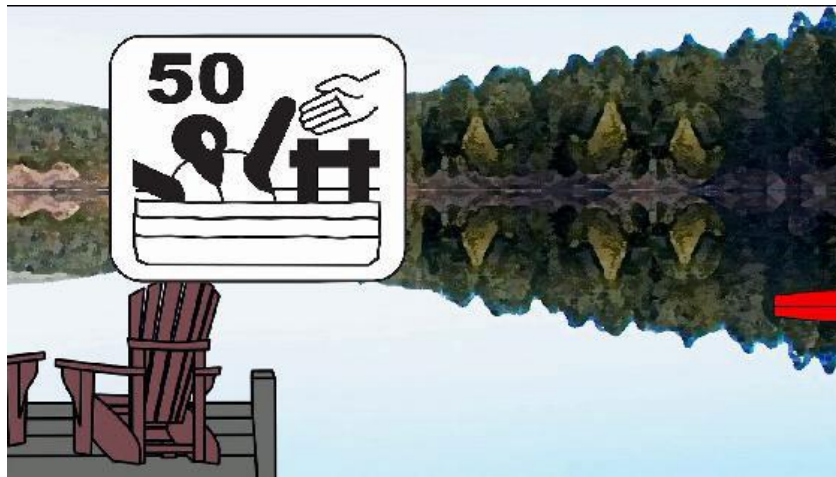
PERFORMANCE LEVEL ICONS

Devices are designed, constructed, and tested under controlled conditions and assigned a Performance Level that indicates the conditions of use for which it is intended.

Performance is a combination of factors - buoyancy, freeboard, turning, stability, and visibility.

The icons on new labels are international symbols that are adopted from the International Standards Organization (ISO) sub-committee for life jacket standards.

Level 50



- swim skills expected of user
- not recommended for weak or non-swimmers
- close to shore and immediate assistance
- no turning ability

Level 70



- calm or sheltered waters
- close to shore or help near-to-hand
- no turning ability

Level 100



- calm or sheltered waters
- some time to wait for rescue
- some turning ability

Level 150



- offshore waters with waves
- turning ability

Level 275



- offshore emergency situations
- used with weight of extra tools, equipment, or clothing

TYPE SYSTEM PFD CLASSIFICATIONS (OLD)

Type I PFD



Type I Life Jackets

Off-Shore Life Jacket

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

Sizes:

- Two sizes fit most children and adults

Advantages:

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

Disadvantages:

- Bulky, uncomfortable

Type II PFD



Type II Life Jackets

Near-Shore Buoyant Vest

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

Sizes:

- Infant, child, youth, and adult

Advantages:

- Less bulky
- Turns some unconscious wearers face-up
- More comfortable than Type I PFD

Disadvantages:

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

Type III PFD: Vest, Jackets, & Work Suits



Flotation Aid

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

Sizes:

- Many sizes from child - small through adult

Advantages:

- Generally, the most comfortable type
- Designed for activity marked on the device
- Available in many styles

Disadvantages:

- May have to tilt head back to avoid face-down
- Wearer's face may be covered by waves
- Not for extended survival in rough water

Type IV PFD: Rings, Horseshoes, Throwables, & Cushions



Throwable Device

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

Kinds:

- Rings, Horseshoe Buoys and Cushions

Advantages:

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

Disadvantages:

- Not for unconscious persons
- Not for non-swimmers or children
- Not for many hours in rough water

Type V PFD

Type II - as noted on label



Type III - as noted on label



Type III - as noted on label



Special Use Devices

Only for special uses or conditions. Equal to either Type I, II, or III performance as noted on the label

Varieties include:

- Boardsailing vests, deck suits, work vest, hybrid PFDs, & others (including inflatable PFDs)

Advantages:

- Made for specific activities
- 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
- Required to be worn to be counted as a regulation PFD

Defender carries a complete line of USCG Approved Life Jackets and PFD's from Mustang Survival, Revere, Stearns, Spinlock, Kent, Full Throttle, Onyx, and more.

Note: All recreational boats must carry one wearable PFD (Type I, II, III or Type V PFD) for each person aboard. A Type V PFD provides performance of either a Type I, II, or III PFD (as marked on its label) and must be used according to the label requirements. Any boat 16ft and longer (except canoes and kayaks) must also carry one throwable PFD (Type IV PFD).