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LIFE JACKET SAFETY TIPS



Every year the statistics say the same thing – life jacket use could have saved more lives. UL Tests personal flotation devices (including life jackets) to the most rigorous standards to ensure safety and strongly advocates life jacket use. Here are a few tips to make sure your life jacket is providing the highest level of safety.

Everyone Gets a PFD

Ensure you have at least one U.S. Coast Guard-approved/UL-Listed personal flotation device (PFD) for each person on board. Look for the UL Mark on the inside of each life jacket.

Fit the Whole Family

Read the life jacket's label to make sure the device is appropriate for each individual's height and weight. Check the fit on children before purchasing by gently pulling up on the PFD's shoulders. A properly fitted life jacket should keep a child's chin and ears from slipping through the neck holes. Also, routinely check the fit of your child's life jacket to make sure it continues to be the correct size for her height and weight.

Check It Every Time

Before going out, inspect PFDs for rips, holes and tears, making sure straps and hardware are in place and secure. Also, check the PFD's fit on land and its buoyancy in shallow water before venturing far from shore. Relax your body and let your head tilt back. The PFD should keep your chin above water and allow you to breathe easily.

Use the Real Thing

Inflatable toys and swimming aids are not substitutes for PFDs. Choose a U.S. Coast Guard inspected/UL Listed device. Also, it is important to have the correct type of PFD for the purpose of your trip- a cruise on a calm lake or a deep-sea fishing excursion may call for different types of PFDs.

Store Safely

Do not leave PFDs in the sun for long periods or dry on a radiator or heater because sunlight and heat can weaken some synthetic fabrics and degrade the buoyancy material. Remove them from the boat after use so they don't become wet and mildewed, and store them in a dry location.

Stand Out in a Crowd

Your PFD should make you highly visible in the water. Orange may not be your best color, but it's the easiest one for rescuers to spot. It's especially important that small children are highly visible.