



A SAFETY MESSAGE

From the Newfoundland and Labrador
Fish Harvesting Safety Association (NL-FHSA)

PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES SAVE LIVES, HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW...

Who should use them and when should they be worn?

Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs) should be worn by anyone who is at risk of drowning. If you're working on deck, assess the risk. Consider "what if?" something goes wrong. If there is a possibility – even a remote one – that you could end up in the water, you should be wearing a PFD. If you're in a smaller open boat, you know how quickly incidents can happen, so there's always a risk of drowning. At the NL-FHSA, we recommend that anyone working in an open boat wear a PFD at all times. Don't wait for the skipper to tell you when to wear a PFD, make the personal decision to be safe and wear one, even if nobody else is doing it. It's a decision that could save your life!

What kind of PFD should I wear?

All PFD's will greatly increase your chances of survival, there's no doubt about it. However, PFD's that automatically inflate when they're submerged are typically your best option. These PFDs are low-profile and light weight, making them easy to wear while you work. They inflate automatically, meaning you won't be in the water struggling to pull a cord. Modern inflatables also won't inflate accidentally, and required submersion in at least 4" of water to activate. This greatly cuts down on accidental inflations and the cost of re-arm CO₂ kits.

Why should I wear a PFD?

This one is simple, PFDs save lives. When you end up in the water wearing a PFD, you don't have to expend energy trying to stay afloat. You can use your energy for activating your Personal Locator Beacon (PLB), climbing out of the water, or assisting your crewmates. PFDs also hug your torso tightly, helping you retain heat in your core, and giving you extra time to get out of the water before hypothermia sets in. Modern PFDs feature high visibility colors and reflective strips when they inflate, making you significantly more visible in the water, reducing rescue time. Most importantly, when you consider why you should be wearing a PFD, think of your family, would they want you to wear one? These are the people affected most if you don't make it home safe.

PFD's vs. Lifejackets

People often believe that PFDs and lifejackets are one and the same. This is not the case. PFDs are designed to give you the buoyancy you need to stay afloat. Lifejackets will not only give you buoyancy, but also help keep your head above water with your face pointed upwards, giving you the ability to breathe even if you're unconscious. While valuable, this feature often makes lifejackets significantly more bulky than PFDs. Lifejackets are great to have on hand if you have ample warning before abandonment. You can grab it, put it on, and prepare for entry into the water. Unfortunately, most incidents at sea happen so fast that you aren't able to prepare. What you're

wearing while you're working is likely what you'll be wearing in the water. This is why light weight and low-profile PFDs are so valuable. It's easy to wear while you work, meaning you're more likely to keep it on. You can wear one all the time and never worry about being unprepared should an incident occur.

Remember, PFDs don't get in the way. They keep you from drowning. Save your life – wear a PFD.

For more information on PFD's check out the NL-FHSA website at www.nlfhsa.com