

Fatality Statistics

85% of canoe fatalities were not wearing a lifejacket.

48% of kayak fatalities were not wearing a lifejacket.

Experienced paddlers are four times as likely to wear their lifejacket.

Lifejackets not only provide additional flotation in case of a capsize or unexpected swim, but they also provide an essential layer of warmth in cold water. **Boat safe. Boat Smart. Wear it.**

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Part of ACA's Paddle Safe, Paddle Smart Series

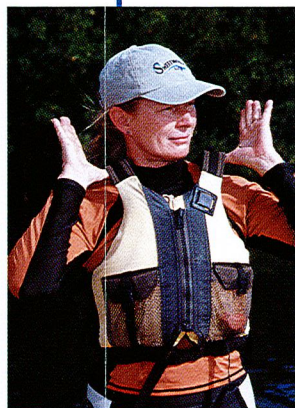
Wear it! Life Jackets Matter



Lifejackets Matter

Expect to capsize and swim occasionally when paddling a canoe, kayak or raft - it's part of the sport! But when you hit the water unexpectedly, even strong swimmers need a lifejacket, also known as a personal flotation device (PFD). It allows you to concentrate on doing what's needed to execute a self rescue and will allow you to assist others.

Nearly 70% of all drownings involving canoes, kayaks or rafts might have been avoided if the victim had been wearing a lifejacket!



Find the Perfect Fit

Because paddlers wear their lifejackets all day, make sure yours has a secure, yet comfortable, fit. When wearing a lifejacket properly you will hardly know you have it on. Although all USCG-approved lifejackets meet certain strength and buoyancy standards, they are NOT all the same. Spend some extra money for a higher-quality model. It will have softer foam, a more comfortable fit and improved adjustability. Make sure the lifejacket adjusts easily and fits snugly over clothing worn for different weather conditions. Few universal-sized lifejackets fit as well as models sized small, medium, large, extra large and extra extra large. Check the length of the jacket to make sure

that it fits while you are paddling. A jacket which hits the backrest in a kayak with each stroke will get annoying by the end of the day.

We all have different shapes and torso lengths. Take the time to find your perfect fit. Several companies now make lifejackets designed specifically for women. Kids lifejackets are now available in more options than ever before so there is no excuse to skip the lifejacket. You should be able to lift children by their lifejackets without having them fall out! With very young children with flat torsos, a crotch strap is a great idea to help hold the lifejacket in place. The US Coast Guard places people less than 90 pounds into a separate sizing category. If a child is heavier than that look for an extra-small adult lifejacket. The bottom line is make sure it fits the intended wearer.

What type is for me?

Many people think that a lifejacket is bulky, smelly and uncomfortable, but that just isn't true anymore. The U.S. Coast Guard places lifejackets into appropriate categories for use.

The US Coast Guard is in the development stage of an entirely revamped Lifejacket labeling system. The new labels are designed to make comparing features easier and to allow the consumer to

make the best choice for his/her type of boating. The labels will feature categories of buoyancy instead of the current numeric rating and will also feature a symbol to indicate if the jacket will turn the wearer face up, if the jacket may turn the wearer face up or if the jacket will have no impact on the wearer's position in

water other than to float.



It's the Law!

State law dictates when PFD use is necessary. Where state laws do not exist, federal law requires that children under the age of 13 wear a life jacket on a recreational boat, unless the child is below deck, in an enclosed cabin, or if the boat is not under way. Since most paddlecraft don't have decks below or cabins, this means all the time when in use. Check with your state boating officials regarding your state requirements. Set a good example for youngsters: wear your life jacket.

