

LIFE JACKET FACTS

Most boaters know they're required to have a U.S. Coast Guard-approved wearable life jacket on board for every person on their boat. Boating safety advocates recommend that all boaters and passengers not only have a life jacket, but wear it at all times while boating.

Accidents on the water can happen much too fast to reach and put on a stowed life jacket. Drowning is the reported cause of death in 79 percent of all boating fatalities – and 86 percent of drowning victims in recreational boating accidents were not wearing a life jacket in 2019.

The good news is that today's life jackets are much more comfortable, lightweight and stylish than the bulky orange style most boaters know. Life jackets that use inflatable technologies are cool and comfortable. They may resemble a pair of suspenders or a belt pack. Many inflate automatically when immersed in water.

There are U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket styles available for almost any boating activity.



Cruising in an open motorboat:

Comfort is key – choose a life jacket you'll want to wear. For ages 16 and older, inflatable life jackets are a great option.



Hunting and cold weather:

Full coats and suits are available in camouflage colors for waterfowl hunting and for those who boat when air and water temperatures are cool.



Fishing: Designed with the angler's needs in mind; vest-style life jackets have features such as pockets and clips to replace the fishing vest and keep the angler safe, while allowing for the needed full range of motion and mobility.



Paddling: Special life jackets are designed with large openings for arms to allow ease of movement.



Personal watercraft and water sports: Inherently buoyant, lighter-weight life jackets are rugged, with multiple buckles and clasps to keep them secure after impact with the water.



Children: Virtually all styles available are sized especially for children – some with cartoon characters or other high-visibility themes, and many include additional safety features such as straps for pulling children from the water.



Pets: Life jackets are even available for our four-legged friends. It's helpful to purchase one with a handle on top to easily pull your pet out of the water, if needed.