

LIFE JACKET COMFORT AND FIT

Today's life jackets come in a variety of shapes, sizes, colors and materials. No matter which life jacket a boater chooses, it should be right for them, their planned activities and the water conditions they expect to encounter. Here are tips for a boater when selecting a life jacket.

Try It On

- Check the manufacturer's ratings for size and weight.
- Make sure the life jacket is properly zipped and/or buckled.
- Check for fit by raising arms above their head while wearing the life jacket and ask a friend to grasp the tops of the arm openings and gently pulling up.
- If there is excess room above the openings and the life jacket rides up over a boater's chin or face, it does NOT fit properly. A **snug** fit in these areas signals a properly fitting life jacket.

Fit Facts

- It is extremely important to choose a properly fitting life jacket.
- Life jackets that are too big will cause the flotation device to push up around a boater's face, which could be dangerous.
- Life jackets that are too small may not be able to keep someone afloat.

Important Reminders

- Make sure the life jacket is U.S. Coast Guard approved.
- Double check that the life jacket is appropriate for the water activity. Read the label!
- Take the time to ensure a proper fit. A life jacket that is too large or too small can cause different situational problems.
- Check the life jacket is in good serviceable condition, with no tears or holes. Test to make sure it works properly.
- Do not use an adult life jacket for children. should make sure all children are wearing a properly fitted, child-sized life jackets based on their weight while boating. Do not buy a life jacket for a child to "grow into."

Some state laws vary but it is always safe to assume and a smart move no matter what the age, that on recreational boats underway, children under 13 years old must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket unless they are below decks or in an enclosed cabin. For more information, please check with local Marine Law Enforcement Authorities.

Updated: February 2017