



# Safety Equipment Lifejackets Marine Safety



## Buying a lifejacket

Before you buy, try the lifejacket on in the shop. Choose the appropriate weight and size range. It should be snug without confining or riding up. Ensure you can put it on quickly, with minimal instruction.

Choose one that is made in bright colours and reflective tape which will assist rescuers to find you at night.

## Size and fit

For infants, because of the varying weight distribution of babies it is difficult to put flotation in the right places. Children less than about a year old cannot be adequately catered for and should not be taken boating.

For older children and adults, there are three main things to look for:

- the weight range on the lifejacket's label agrees with the person's weight;
- the lifejacket is a snug fit (loose lifejackets work poorly); and
- it is comfortable to wear.

## Maintaining lifejackets

Skippers should check the condition of their lifejackets annually or as recommended by the manufacturer.

- Check for cuts and tears that could let water enter the lifejacket and rot the buoyant material.
- Check the straps are in good condition and not frayed.
- Rinse with fresh water if it gets wet during use, dry prior to storage.

## Inflatable lifejackets

Inflatable lifejackets are becoming increasingly popular. These CO<sub>2</sub> inflated garments are lighter and less cumbersome than conventional foam lifejackets and are quite versatile – they're even made as wet weather jackets and windproof vests.

Care should be taken when purchasing an inflatable jacket to ensure that it conforms with Australian Standards: AS 4758 – Level 100 (or higher), AS 1512 or ISO 12402. This will be clearly marked on the lifejacket.

You should be aware of the added maintenance requirements that come with this style of jacket and carry out self checks regularly (see opposite). Crew and passengers should be briefed on their operation.

## Inflatable lifejacket maintenance

It is important that inflatable lifejackets are serviced regularly. You should follow the manufacturer's instructions or, if the manufacturer doesn't specify, you should have your lifejacket serviced at least every 12 months. This will ensure it is in good working order.



## Self check your inflatable lifejackets

Inflatable lifejackets are certainly very convenient but remember to be diligent with your checks and undertake regular servicing. Self checking a lifejacket can be done at any time to ensure the jacket is functioning properly.

### STEP 1

Check for visible signs of wear and damage. Ensure all fastenings and buckles are in good working order.



### STEP 2

Following the manufacturer's instructions, reveal the inflation system and oral inflation tube. Inflate the bladder using the oral tube and leave overnight in a room with a constant temperature. If the bladder loses pressure, immediately take the jacket to an accredited service agent for further tests. Do not attempt to repair the jacket yourself.



### STEP 3

Use the cap attached to the oral inflation tube to deflate the bladder. Invert the cap and press down on the valve at the top of the oral tube. Do not insert other objects into top of tube as they may damage the valve. Roll or press jacket to deflate fully.



### STEP 4

Remove CO<sub>2</sub> cylinder and inspect. The cylinder should be intact with no rust or corrosion. Weigh cylinder on kitchen or letter scales, ensure weight corresponds to the minimum gross weight engraved on cylinder +/- 2g. If the cylinder is rusted, corroded, has been pierced or is not the correct weight it should be replaced immediately. On auto inflation jackets also ensure the auto components are armed and in date. Refit the cylinder to inflation system, tightening it by hand until firm. Do not over tighten.



### STEP 5

Repack jacket as per manufacturer's instructions. Ensure manual inflation toggle is accessible and unlikely to be caught when being worn.





## The rules

A lifejacket must be carried for each person (over the age of 12 months) on board a recreational vessel when operating in unprotected waters.

Unprotected waters are WA's navigable waters that are not contained:

- in a lake;
- in a river;
- in an estuary; or
- by any breakwater.

*Note: This does not include the waters of Cambridge Gulf or Lake Argyle.*

## Lifejackets for use in unprotected waters

Lifejackets approved for general use in unprotected waters bear the standard or stamp:

- AS 4758 – Level 100 (or higher);
- ISO 12402;
- AS 1512; or
- SOLAS.

Lifejackets manufactured to Australian Standard 4758 incorporate advances in design and manufacturing.

Each lifejacket must suit the weight of the person, be maintained in a good condition and easily accessible.

It is important that each person has an approved lifejacket suitable for the activity they are involved in. Whether you're a boater, paddler, fisherman or sailor, there's a modern lifejacket style to suit your specific need. See the **Types of lifejackets** table opposite.

If unsure, contact the Marine Safety Hotline: **13 11 56**.










## When to wear a lifejacket

You will enhance your safety if you wear a lifejacket at all times, or at least:

- at the first sign of bad weather;
- between sunset and sunrise or during restricted visibility;
- when operating in unfamiliar waters;
- when operating with a following sea;
- when boating alone (this is especially recommended);
- at all times on children under 10 years;
- if you are a poor swimmer; or
- on medication that may affect your balance.



## Types of lifejackets

Lifejacket	Level	PFD	Standard	Comments
 	  	Type 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AS 4758                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Level 275</li> <li>– Level 150</li> <li>– Level 100</li> </ul> </li> <li>or</li> <li>• ISO 12402</li> <li>or</li> <li>• AS 1512</li> </ul>	<p><b>Level 100 and higher lifejackets</b> provide a high level of buoyancy and are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Approved</b> for use in unprotected waters.</li> <li>• Fitted with head and neck support.</li> <li>• Designed to keep you in a face up floating position.</li> <li>• Manufactured using high-visibility colours.</li> <li>• Suitable for offshore and general boating in all waters.</li> </ul>
		Type 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AS 4758                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Level 50</li> </ul> </li> <li>or</li> <li>• ISO 12402</li> <li>or</li> <li>• AS 1499</li> </ul>	<p><b>Level 50 lifejackets</b> have a lower level of buoyancy than the Level 100 and higher lifejackets and are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Not approved for general use</b> in unprotected waters.</li> <li>• Not fitted with head and neck support.</li> <li>• Not designed to keep you in a face up floating position.</li> <li>• Manufactured using high-visibility colours.</li> <li>• Normally used for sailing, kayaking, canoeing, wind surfing and on personal water craft.</li> </ul>
		Type 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AS 4758                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Level 50S</li> </ul> </li> <li>or</li> <li>• ISO 12402</li> <li>or</li> <li>• AS 2260</li> </ul>	<p><b>Level 50S lifejackets</b> have similar buoyancy to the Level 50 lifejackets and are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Not approved for general use</b> in unprotected waters.</li> <li>• Not fitted with head and neck support.</li> <li>• Not designed to keep you in a face up floating position.</li> <li>• Not manufactured using high-visibility colours.</li> <li>• Favoured by waterskiers, wakeboarders, kayakers and canoeists where comfort and style are important.</li> <li>• Available as a built in garment (eg water skiing wet suit).</li> </ul>

\* 'general use in unprotected waters' includes all vessels except for: PWCs operating within 400m of the shore, paddlecraft, sailboards and kitesurfers.

## Contact details

Department of Transport  
 Email: [marine.safety@transport.wa.gov.au](mailto:marine.safety@transport.wa.gov.au)  
 Website: [www.transport.wa.gov.au/imagine](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/imagine)  
 Marine Safety Hotline: **13 11 56**

For further information go to [www.transport.wa.gov.au/lifejackets](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/lifejackets) or scan the QR code.



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