

## Personal Floatation Devices-PFD's/Life Jackets

The operator of every boat must supply the required number and type of approved Personal Floatation Devices that are described below. An approved PFD is one which meets the safety standards established by the U.S. Coast Guard, has a Coast Guard approval stamped or sewn on it, and is in serviceable condition (ripped, damaged or unserviceable PFD's are not legal). All PFD's must be readily accessible and wearable Personal Flotation Devices must be the proper size for the intended wearer.

- **Boats:** It is unlawful to operate any boat (including inflatables and inner tubes) unless at least one of the following type PFD's of the proper size is available for each person on board:

Type I = Wearable type PFD

Type II = Wearable type PFD

Type III = Wearable type PFD

Type V = Wearable type PFD that must be worn to be legal when boat is underway

In addition to the above, each boat 16 feet or longer (except canoes and kayaks) must have at least one throwable Type IV PFD-- Buoyant cushion or ring buoy on board.

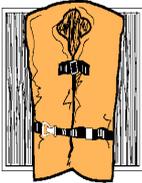
- **Personal Watercraft (PWC):** It is unlawful to operate a PWC unless each person is **wearing** a type I, II, III, or type V personal flotation device.
- **Sailboarders/Wind Surfers:** Are exempt from PFD requirements, but are encouraged to wear one.

### TYPES OF PFD'S



#### Type I - Offshore Life Jacket

The Type I PFD provides the most buoyancy and is best for open, rough or remote water, where rescue may be slow in coming. It is designed to turn most unconscious wearers face-up in the water. The Type I comes in both adult and child size.



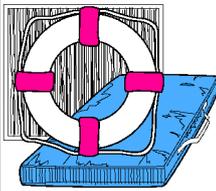
#### Type II - Near-Shore Buoyant Vest

The Type II PFD is good for calm, inland water or where there is a good chance of quick rescue. This type will turn some, but not all, unconscious wearers face-up in the water. Less bulky than a Type I PFD, the Type II is the least expensive type of PFD. It is available in many sizes.



#### Type III Flotation Aid

The Type III PFD is good for calm, inland water or where there is a good chance of quick rescue. Designed to keep the wearer in a vertical position, it may require the wearer to tilt their head back to avoid going face-down in the water and therefore is not recommended for extended survival in rough water. The Type III allows more freedom of movement for active water sports and is generally the most comfortable type for continuous wear. Float coats, fishing vests, and vests designed with features suitable for various sports activities are examples of this type of PFD.



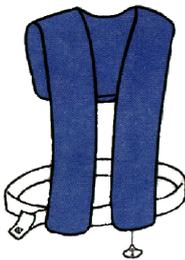
#### **Type IV Throwable Device**

The Type IV PFD is an approved device which is designed to be thrown to a conscious person in the water. This device is not designed to be worn and must have at least 16.5 pounds of buoyancy. These usually take the shape of a boat cushion, life ring, or horseshoe device. These devices must be readily accessible during boat operation.



#### **Type V - Special Use Device or Hybrid Inflatable**

The Type V PFD is a special use device intended for a certain activity and may be carried instead of another PFD, but only if used in accordance with its label. Some of these devices provide hypothermia protection while others, such as a work vest, are intended for freedom of movement. A Type V may also take the form of hybrid inflatables such as float coats which combine inherently buoyant material with an inflatable bladder for extra lift. Type V PFD's must be worn when underway to be legal.



#### **INFLATABLE PFD'S**

Inflatable PFD's come in Types I, II, and III. Although the different "Types" of inflatable PFD's are intended for use in the same areas as inherently buoyant types of PFD's, the characteristics of inflatable PFD's are different. Inflatable PFD's are not inherently buoyant and will not float without inflation. For Types I, II, and III inflatables, the lower the Type number, the better the PFD's performance (e.g., Type I is better than Type II).

Although inflatable PFD's are considered one of the most comfortable PFD's to wear when it's hot, inflatable PFD's require regular maintenance and are not recommended for children or individuals who can't swim. Inflatable PFD's are not for use where water impact is expected as when water-skiing, riding personal watercraft, or whitewater paddling.

**Drowning as a result of capsizing and falls overboard are the leading cause of boating fatalities in Wisconsin. Wearing your PFD is your best defense against drowning!**