

WAC 352-60-030 Personal flotation devices required. No person shall operate or permit the operation of a vessel on the waters of the state unless the vessel has on board United States Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices as follows:

(1) Vessels less than sixteen feet (4.9 meters) in length, and canoes and kayaks of any length, must have one Type I, II, or III PFD, or one wearable with a buoyancy of 50, 70, 100, 150, or 275 newtons and is of the proper size for each person on board.

(2) Vessels sixteen feet (4.9 meters) or more in length, except a canoe or kayak, must have one Type I, II, or III wearable PFD, or a wearable PFD with a buoyancy of 50, 70, 100, 150, or 275 newtons of the proper size for each person on board and, in addition, one Type IV, or a throwable PFD.

(3) Alternate PFD requirement. A United States Coast Guard approved Type V PFD may be carried in lieu of any required PFD under this section if it is approved for the activity in which the vessel is engaged in and used in compliance with requirements on the approval label.

(4) Stowage and condition.

(a) All personal flotation devices required by this section shall be readily accessible to all persons on board and be in good and serviceable condition. All Type IV or throwable personal flotation devices must be immediately available.

(b) All devices shall be approved by the United States Coast Guard and marked in compliance with Coast Guard standards.

(c) No PFD may exhibit deterioration that could diminish the performance of the PFD, including:

(i) Metal or plastic hardware used to secure the PFD on the wearer that is broken, deformed, or weakened by corrosion;

(ii) Webbing and straps used to secure the PFD on the wearer that are ripped, torn, or which have become separated from the attachment point on the PFD; or

(iii) Any rotted or deteriorated structural component that fails when tugged.

(d) In addition to meeting the requirements of this section, no inherently buoyant PFD, including the inherently buoyant components of a hybrid inflatable PFD, may exhibit:

(i) Rips, tears, or open seams in the fabric or coating that are large enough to allow the loss of buoyant material;

(ii) Buoyant material that has become hardened, nonresilient, permanently compressed, waterlogged, oil-soaked, or which shows evidence of fungus or mildew; or

(iii) Loss of buoyant material or buoyant material that is not held in place.

(e) Except as provided in this section, a properly armed inflation mechanism, complete with a full inflation medium cartridge and all status indicators showing that the inflation mechanism is properly armed, must also have:

(i) Inflatable chambers that are all capable of holding air;

(ii) Oral inflation tubes that are not blocked, detached, or broken;

(iii) A manual inflation lanyard or lever that is not inaccessible, broken, or missing; and

(iv) Inflator status indicators that are not broken or otherwise nonfunctional.

(f) All devices shall be approved by the United States Coast Guard or Underwriters Laboratory and marked in compliance with United States Coast Guard Standards.

(5) Exemptions. Racing shells, rowing sculls and racing kayaks are exempt from the requirements of this section provided they are manually propelled, recognized by a national or international racing association and designed solely for competitive racing.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 79A.05.070, 79A.05.030. WSR 21-20-006, § 352-60-030, filed 9/22/21, effective 10/23/21. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.51.400, 88.12.065, 88.12.125, 88.12.245 and chapter 33, C.F.R. Part 175.15. WSR 94-16-027, § 352-60-030, filed 7/25/94, effective 8/25/94. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.51.400. WSR 84-11-057 (Order 79), § 352-60-030, filed 5/18/84.]