

LIFE JACKETS SAVE LIVES

Whilst boating on the Broads is generally considered a safe pastime it is important that people do not become complacent and when they are around the Broads they always put safety first.

Here are a few reminders: Life Jackets and Buoyancy Aids are sometimes called Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs). PFDs are measured in Newtons. A Newton is a measured unit of Force and the higher the Newton rating is on a PFD the higher the buoyancy rating.



Buoyancy Aids

A buoyancy aid (not a life jacket) looks like a padded waistcoat and should be made of closed cell foam with a simple, secure zip or buckle. Buoyancy aids are ideal for use in sheltered or inshore waters to provide a degree of buoyancy in a lightweight garment. They will only provide limited protection against drowning.



Life Jackets

Life jackets are available in a wide range of colours, specifications and different CE classifications. There are many reputable life jacket manufacturers supplying the leisure marine market. Opposite are the ISO standards introduced into the UK in 2006. A life jacket has the advantage that, when fully inflated, it will turn an unconscious person to float upwards, with mouth and nose clear of the water.

When purchasing a jacket be sure that you are aware of how to fasten it securely and of its limitations. Unfortunately life jackets are often left in a locker somewhere. Many would say it's because they are uncomfortable and cumbersome to wear. This is not true. A properly selected life jacket should

be comfortable and you should hardly notice you are wearing it. Comfort is an essential consideration if you are to wear your life jacket regularly. **Your life jacket will not save your life if it's stored away somewhere – so please wear it!**

Most good manufacturers/suppliers provide good descriptions regarding typical use, weights etc. and will help you to decide which life jacket is right for you.

It is essential that you wear the right life jacket for the job at hand and never wear anything on top of your life jacket.

Servicing / Care of your life jacket

It is recommended that a qualified agent should service automatic life jackets at least every 2 years but preferably every year. Regularly inspect your life jacket for wear and tear. Follow the care procedures as described in your owner's manual.

Your life jacket will provide many years of service, provided it is cared for correctly.

Generally life jackets should be cleaned with a good quality mild detergent in cool water. Rinse well with clean water and allow to dry naturally. Sponge off contaminants such as oil or diesel immediately with clean water – but don't forget to first remove the immersion-sensing trigger device!

Life jackets' fabric has protective coatings and these will be damaged by proprietary cleaning fluids, thinners, spirits or similar substances.

Enjoy your water activities but do please keep safe.

Personal Flotation Device (PFD)	ISO 12402-2 to ISO 12402-6	
Application	Performance Level	
Offshore, extreme conditions, special protective clothing, heavy equipment	life jackets	275 N
Offshore, foul weather clothing		150 N
Sheltered waters, light clothing		100 N
Swimmers only, sheltered waters, help at hand, limited protection against drowning – not a Life Jacket	buoyancy aids	50 N

A VISUAL GUIDE TO SAVING LIVES AFLOAT

Aids to FLOTATION Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

LIFE-SAVERS (Life Jacket)

100N to
275N

- turns casualty face-up
- restricts ability to self-help
e.g. when lifting out of water pulled backwards

FLOTATION AID (Buoyancy Aid)

50N

- only an Aid
- more comfort
- permits freer movement
e.g. self-help to grab a ladder or climb into a boat

Aids to RECOVERY

Life-Buoy or any:

- Floating equipment
e.g. empty plastic bottle
- Boat hook
- Safety-line
- Ladder
- Improvised crane
- Jacobs Ladder