

## Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

Department of Interior policy requires that PFDs be worn at all times on vessels less than 26 feet in length. The PFDs must be international orange in color with reflective tape (485DM 22.4A(5), (6), (7)). Currently, inflatable PFDs require special approval for use.

### DESCRIPTIVE TYPES OF PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES (PFDs)



**A TYPE I PFD, or OFFSHORE LIFE JACKET** provides the most buoyancy. It is effective for all waters, especially open, rough, or remote waters where rescue may be delayed. It is designed to turn most unconscious wearers in the water to a face-up position. The TYPE I comes in two sizes: Adult size provides at least 22 pounds of buoyancy, the child size, 11 pounds, minimum.

Off Shore Life Jacket



**A TYPE III PFD, or FLOTATION AID** is good for calm, inland water, or where there is a good chance of quick rescue. It is designed so that wearers can put themselves in a face-up position in the water. The wearer may have to tilt their head back to avoid turning face down. TYPE III has the same minimum buoyancy as a TYPE II PFD. Float coat, fishing vests, and vests designed for various water sports are examples.

Flotation Aide



**A TYPE IV PFD, or THROWABLE DEVICE** is intended for calm, inland water with heavy boat traffic, where help is always present. It is designed to be thrown to a person in the water and grasped and held by the user until rescued. It is not designed to be worn. Type IV devices include buoyant cushions, ring buoys, and horseshoe buoys.

Throwable Device



**A TYPE V PFD, or SPECIAL USE DEVICE** is intended for specific activities and may be carried instead of another PFD only if used according to the approval condition on the label. Some Type V devices provide hypothermia protection. Varieties include deck suits, work vests, board sailing vests, and Hybrid PFDs. A TYPE V HYBRID inflatable PFD is the least bulky. It contains a small amount of inherent buoyancy and an inflatable chamber.

Type V Hybrid

### **PFD Maintenance**

- A Do not alter PFD
- A Do not kneel or sit on PFD, it will lose buoyancy
- A Drip dry/air dry after use
- A Store in well ventilated place, away from direct sunlight
- A Do not expose to artificial heat source

### **Customizing Your PFD (recommended, not required)**

- A Whistle
- A Strobe/marker light
- A Signal Mirror
- A Rescue/emergency knife
- A Slings
- A Carabiners
- A Sunscreen
- A Flare
- A Space blanket
- A Snacks in sealed bag