

# Personal Floatation Devices in Recreational Boating

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National Boating Safety Advisory Council (NBSAC)

# Composition & Mission

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- National Boating Safety Advisory Council (NBSAC)
  - 21 Members with diverse composition
    - 7 from States (NASBLA)
    - 7 from Industry
    - 7 from boating public
  - Mission
    - Provide direction to the US Coast Guard on proposed & current recreational boating safety regulations and other boating safety matters

# Resolutions

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- Recognized increased concern for boating fatalities associated with lack of PFD wear rates
- Prompting from 1996 – 2004:
  - 13 Council resolutions
  - 3 rule promulgations

# Actions/Findings

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- Focus on areas aimed at increasing PFD wear rates have included:
  - Boater education
  - Child PFD wearage requirements
  - PFD technology
  - Model Act for PFD wear
  - PFD workshops

# Boater Education

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- Requested USCG / NASBLA jointly encourage & support adoption of mandatory safe boating education
- Supported State boater education reciprocity programs
- Requested the USCG engage in PFD public awareness programs

# Boater Education (cont.)

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- Requested USCG work with NASBLA and NTSB to accelerate development of State boater education
- Efforts continue today as more States enact boater education that include the lifesaving benefits of wearing PFDs

# Child PFD Wearage

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- Initial focus was to enact measures to protect children
- Beginning in 1998, recommended Federal rulemaking requiring PFD wearage by:
  - children 12 years and under
  - riders of personal watercraft (PWCs)
  - riders of tow behind activities

# Child PFD Wearage (Cont.)

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- Four (4) additional resolutions resulted in an Interim Rule for wearing of PFDs for 12 & under children – June 2002
- Effective December 2003
- Final Rule July 30, 2004



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# PFD Technology

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- Encouraged USCG pursuit & approval of user-friendly PFD options
- Resulted in increased availability of approved inflatable PFDs
- Promoted usage of unconditionally approved Type I & II PFDs for children less than 50 lbs. for special water activities
- Promoted carriage of PFD cartridges on airlines

# Model Act Mandatory Wear

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- Recognized that education & intervention had no effect on PFD wear rates
- Requested NASBLA develop a Model Act requiring wearage of PFDs on:
  - Vessels on 21 feet and under
  - While underway

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# PFD Workshops

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- Recognized that education, mandatory child PFD laws & technology advances had no effect on PFD wear rates
- Requested USCG organize PFD workshops representing all segments of the recreational boating community, to explore means of increasing PFD wear rates



# Conclusion

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- Drownings caused by failure to wear PFDs must be reduced by:
  - Encouraging industry to expand availability of affordable, user-friendly PFDs
  - Promoting child PFD wear requirements
  - Continuing to consider some form or mandatory PFD wear requirement