

PFD “Life Jacket” Education by Texas Parks and Wildlife

<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/edu/boated/pfd.phtml>

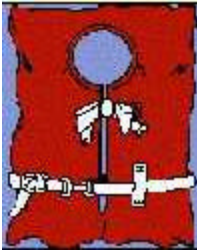


There are many Types and styles of Personal Flotation Devices. Take a look at the categories of PFDs to find out which is best for you. [Click here for an update of Texas PFD law.](#)

TYPE I (Off-Shore Life Jacket) (22 lbs. buoyancy) Best for open, rough or remote water, where rescue may be slow in coming.

Advantages: Floats you best. Turns most unconscious wearers face-up in water. Highly visible color.

Disadvantages: Bulky

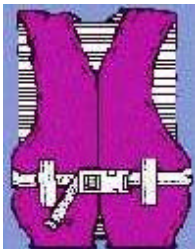


TYPE II (Near-Shore Buoyant Vest) (15.5 lbs. buoyancy) Good for calm, inlandwater, or where there is good chance of fast rescue.

Advantages: Turns some unconscious wearers face-up in water. Less bulky, more comfortable than Type I PFD.

Inexpensive.

Disadvantages: Not for long hours in the water. Will not turn some unconscious wearers face-up in water.



TYPE III (Flotation Aid) (15.5 lbs buoyancy) Good for calm, inland water, or where there is a good chance of fast rescue.

Advantages: Generally the most comfortable Type for continuous wear. Freedom of movement for many active water sports. Available in many styles.

Disadvantages: Wearer may have to tilt head back to avoid going face-down. In rough water, a wearer's face may often be covered by waves. Not for extended survival in rough water.



TYPE IV (Throwable Device) For calm, inland water with heavy boat traffic, where help is always nearby.

Advantages: Can be thrown to someone. Good back-up to wearable PFDs. Some can be used as a seat cushion.

Disadvantages: Not for unconscious persons. Not for nonswimmers or children. Not for many hours in rough water.



TYPE V (Hybrid Device) Required to be worn to be counted as a regulation PFD.

Advantages: Least bulky of all Types. High flotation when inflated. Good for continuous wear.

Disadvantages: May not adequately float some wearers unless partially inflated. Requires active use and care of inflation chamber.

Remember that in Texas:

- Children under 13 years of age in motorboats under 26 feet must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD while underway.
- All vessels under 16 feet (including canoes and kayaks) must be equipped with one Type I, II, III or V for each person on board.
- Vessels 16 feet and longer, in addition to the Type I, II, III or V for each person on board, must have one Type IV which must be readily accessible. Canoes and kayaks over 16 feet are exempt from the Type IV requirement.
- For more complete information, check the [Digest of the Water Safety Act](#).