

Guidance Note – Lifejackets

A guide to selection, care and service

Lifejackets are a vital piece of safety equipment when on or near the water. Evolution in design has led to a range of lifejacket styles in positive buoyancy (“foam”) and inflatable. Inflatable lifejackets however require extra care and mandatory servicing to ensure that they will work as intended when needed.

This note provides information relating to the selection and care of lifejackets, and service for inflatable models. It is intended as a guide only.

Informed choice

- Choose the most appropriate lifejacket for your height and weight, ability and water-based activity.
- There are two common styles of lifejackets – positive buoyancy (“foam”) and inflatable.
- Foam lifejackets are relatively easy to care for, and require no mandatory servicing.
- Inflatable lifejackets are less bulky and allow greater ease of movement, but require extra care, and must be serviced according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Take time to know the difference and choose what is best for you and your activity.

Pre-wear check

- Always perform a pre-wear visual check of any lifejacket to ensure:
 - No visible signs of wear and tear.
 - All buckles zips and straps are not broken and in good condition.
 - With inflatable models you must also check:
 - The CO2 cylinder is full and screwed firmly in, hand tight.
 - The auto cartridge (if an automatic model) is screwed firmly in, hand tight.
 - The pull-cord is clear and ready for use if needed.

Routine inspection and care of Inflatable models

- Check use by date on auto cartridge (if fitted).
- Check service date.
- Inspect the CO2 cylinder for corrosion or damage, and the bladder for signs of abrasion and wear.
- Inflate the bladder using the oral tube, until firm and leave overnight, inspect for any air loss or damage.

- If the lifejacket is set for auto-inflation, remove the auto-inflation cartridge prior to rinsing.
- Wash the jacket in warm soapy water and air dry thoroughly.

NOTE: If there are signs of corrosion, wear, damage or leaks, take the lifejacket to a professional service agent or dispose of it appropriately – do not try to repair it yourself.

Storage

- Thoroughly dry the lifejacket and store in a dry and well ventilated place away from direct sunlight.

Service of inflatable models

- Inflatable lifejackets MUST be serviced once a year or in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Some manufacturers may permit self-servicing.
- If you use a professional service, make sure that you keep all of your receipts and certificates as confirmation of your service.

More information about lifejacket care and service can be found at:

<http://maritimemanagement.transport.nsw.gov.au/lifejackets/lifejacket-servicing-and-maintenance/index.html>

ends.

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