Personal Flotation Devices: 
Requirement to inspect and document

Location: All work areas on or adjacent to bodies of water

Date: September 2019

There is a new OHS Regulation from WorkSafeBC that requires inspection AND documentation of the inspection of inflatable personal flotation devices (PFDs) and lifejackets. This new regulation came into effect on June 3, 2019.

Section 8.29 of the OHS Regulation states: If workers use inflatable personal flotation devices or automatically inflatable lifejackets (example shown to the right), the employer must keep a record of all inspections made and maintenance performed on those PFDs or automatically inflatable lifejackets.

It is recommended that users follow the manufacturer's inspection frequency.

Note: In addition to the new regulation (8.29), review these Regulations related to buoyancy equipment:

- 8.26 When required
- 8.27 Compliance with standards
- 8.30 Retroreflective material


The Differences between a Lifejacket and PFD
A lifejacket is NOT the same as a personal flotation device (PFD), although in many cases they look very similar. The terms "lifejacket" and "personal flotation device (PFD)" are often used interchangeably but there are very important differences.
Differences between a lifejacket and PFD:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lifejacket</th>
<th>Personal Flotation Device (PFD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A lifejacket is designed to turn an unconscious person from face down to face up in the water, allowing them to breathe.</td>
<td>• A PFD is designed to keep a conscious person afloat in calm conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lifejackets have more buoyancy than PFDs. Most of the buoyancy material is in the front of the device.</td>
<td>• PFDs have less buoyancy. The floatation material is on the back of the device. This makes them less bulky and more comfortable allowing for greater movement than a lifejacket.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lifejackets must be red, yellow or orange, and must have a whistle attached. These features make it easier to be located in a rescue situation.</td>
<td>• Canadian-approved PFDs are available in a variety of colours. Bright colours allow a person to be seen easily in the water if help is needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A lifejacket is the best choice for those unable to swim or weak swimmers. It offers the best possible chance for survival should you end up in the water unexpectedly.</td>
<td>• PFDs were designed for use in recreational boating and are a good choice for people who are confident in the water.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Additional Resources and Information:


Examples of other Mustang Survival® PFDs that meet OHS Regulation 8.27 (compliance with standards):