

Water Safety Education

Life Jacket Tips

Why should people of all ages wear life jackets?

Drowning happens quickly, in as little as 30 seconds, and quietly. Wearing a life jacket that fits is one important way to keep anyone safe while near or in the water. Water safety is for everyone!

When buying a life jacket, check for:

- Coast Guard approval label.
- A snug fit. With the life jacket on, raise arms over head. Look to the left and right; the chest part of the jacket shouldn't hit the chin.
- Head support for younger children. A well designed life jacket will support the child's head when they are in the water.
- A strap between the legs for younger children will help keep the life jacket on the child.
- Appropriate type of activity and water conditions. Check the label or ask the salesperson for help.
- Comfort, appearance and bright colors. This is especially important to teens who may be less likely to want to wear a life jacket. Bright colors make it easier to see a person in the water.

Guidelines for wearing life jackets:

Even if you or your child or teen knows how to swim, children, teens and adults should always wear a life jacket:

- When on a boat, raft, inner tube, paddle board, or kayak.
- When swimming in open water like a lake, river or the ocean.
- When playing in or near the water and on docks (for young children).
- When participating in water activities such as paddle boarding, kayaking, skiing, surfing, wind surfing or jet-skiing.

How do you use a life jacket?

- Every spring, check that the life jacket fits well and check for wear and tear. Throw it away if you find air leakage, mildew, rot, or rust, or if buckles or straps don't work.
- Practice wearing your life jacket in the water. Make sure your jacket works for you as designed.
- Never substitute toys, such as water wings or plastic rings, for a life jacket.

Please remember:

A life jacket does not take the place of supervision!



Visit seattlechildrens.org/dp for more water safety information.



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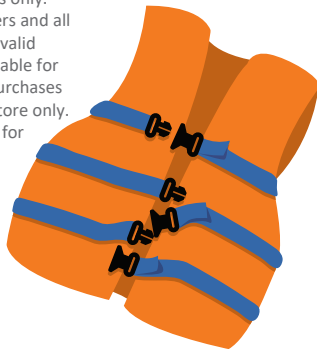
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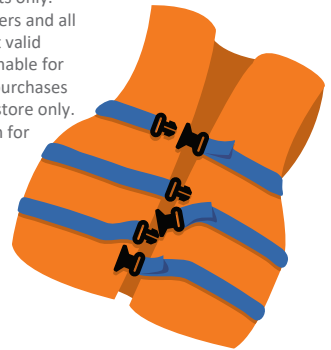
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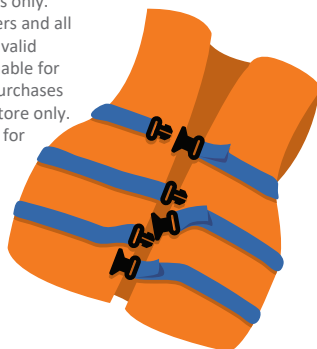
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