

Choosing the right lifejacket

All lifejackets are designed for different purposes, wearer ages, sizes and weights. This fact sheet is to help people who are buying a lifejacket or checking their current one.

Which lifejacket suits which activities?

It is important that everyone on board has an approved lifejacket suitable for the activity, water type and conditions for where you will be boating.



Level 100 – open waters

- minimum requirement for offshore use
- can be used in open, partially smooth and smooth waters
- can be worn when fishing, boating, kayaking and canoeing in all waters
- not for use when water skiing, tubing or riding a personal watercraft (PWC)
- designed to keep you face up in a floating position when in calm water
- bright in colour, sometimes with reflective tape



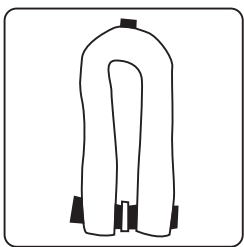
Level 50 – partially smooth waters

- can be used in partially smooth and smooth waters
- can be worn when fishing, boating, sailing, kayaking, canoeing, wind surfing, water skiing, tubing or riding a PWC
- can be worn when riding a PWC beyond smooth or partially smooth waters
- may not rotate you to float face up, but will return you to the surface
- bright in colour



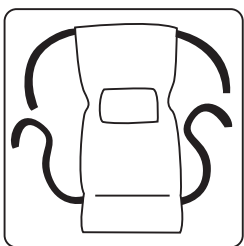
Level 50 Special purpose (50S) – smooth waters

- not suitable for use beyond smooth waters
- can be worn when fishing, boating, sailing, kayaking, canoeing, wind surfing, water skiing, tubing or riding a PWC
- may not rotate you to float face up, but will return you to the surface
- wider range of colours than a Level 50 lifejacket that may be less visible on the water
- may include wet suits with built in buoyancy



Inflatable lifejackets – range of buoyancy levels

- can be used in the waters allowed by its buoyancy level
- can be worn when fishing, boating, kayaking, canoeing and sailing
- not recommended for use when water skiing, tubing or riding a PWC
- must be gas inflated (must not rely solely on oral inflation)
- less bulky than foam jackets, but you must follow the manufacturer's servicing periods and instructions



Coastal and SOLAS – offshore waters

- can be used in all waters
- can be worn when fishing, boating and for offshore activities and commercial vessels
- not for use when water skiing, tubing or riding a PWC
- designed to keep the body afloat for long periods
- these lifejackets have more flotation than a Level 100 lifejacket (they can be Level 150 and Level 275 or other higher standard) with reflective tape and a whistle

Pictograms for Level 100, Level 50 and Level 50S are extracts of, or based on extracts of AS 4758.1-2008 Figure 3 - Reproduced with permission from SAI Global Ltd under Licence 1504-c061.

Make sure your lifejacket fits!

- Choose a lifejacket for your weight range and make sure the size/cut of the lifejacket is suitable. It should fit snugly without being confining or riding up on your body.
- Make sure the neck section or collar does not sit up around your head.
- A crotch strap will prevent the lifejacket from bunching up around your or your child's neck and prevent them from falling out of the bottom of the lifejacket.

Try the lifejacket on in the shop before you buy it. Then, before you go out boating, put it on and try it on in calm water under controlled conditions (for example, a pool). Get a feel for the lifejacket by moving about, swimming and floating. Also jump from the side of the pool a few times – you will see the need for a firm, fully fitted and correctly worn lifejacket.



Lifejacket standards

Lifejackets must display information about which Australian Standard (AS) applies. The lifejacket must comply with this standard.

The current standard is AS 4758, which has replaced AS 1512–1996, AS 1499–1996 and AS 2260–1996. Lifejackets that meet these previous standards are still acceptable for use if they are in good condition.

AS 4758	Previous Australian lifejacket standards
Level 100, Level 150 and Level 275	PFD Type 1
Level 50	PFD Type 2
Level 50S	PFD Type 3

Lifejacket rules

Lifejackets are a vital piece of safety equipment on your boat or PWC. Think of them like your seat belt on the water.

It is compulsory to wear a lifejacket:

- when crossing a designated coastal bar in an open boat that is less than 4.8m in length
- if you are under 12 years old (from 12 months old and up to, but not including, 12 years old) in an open boat that is less than 4.8m in length and underway
- when riding a PWC, water skiing or tubing.

Lifejacket checklist

- ☒ Do you have the right lifejackets for your **whole** trip?
- ☒ Are your lifejackets suited to your activity?
- ☒ Do you have enough lifejackets for everyone that will be on board and are they the right size?
- ☒ Are your lifejackets in good condition?
- ☒ If you will be boating at night, do your lifejackets have reflective tape to help others see you better?
- ☒ Do you have a 'LIFEJACKET' sticker on your boat to show others where the lifejackets are stored?

For more information

visit www.msq.qld.gov.au/Safety/Life-jackets.