

Marine Notice No. 48 of 2015

Notice to all Shipowners, Fishing Vessel Owners, Agents, Shipmasters, Skippers, Fishermen and Seafarers

Personal Flotation Device (PFD) Requirements

In response to Marine Casualty Investigation Board recommendations, the purpose of this Marine Notice is:

- To remind masters, owners, users, charterers, skippers and crew of the legal requirements in relation to the wearing and carrying of Personal Flotation Devices and the need for the proper care and maintenance of such devices as outlined in:

[Marine Notice No. 45 of 2012](#) - “Lifejackets and Buoyancy Aids”, and

[Marine Notice No. 39 of 2013](#) - “Wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) and Increase your chance of survival in the event of entering water”.

Personal Flotation Device (PFD) Requirements

Every person on board should be aware of the critical importance of:

- wearing the correct size, type and performance standard of PFD to perform a risk-related activity whilst enjoying the highest level of appropriate protection,
- properly wearing the PFD fitted with a hold-down device, such as a crotch strap or thigh-straps, over the top of all clothing,
- recognising that clothing traps air which may cause a person not to float as would be expected and clothing absorbs water making a person heavier to support. The person may need to use a PFD with a higher performance standard to ensure that they will self-right face up and their mouth and nose will be kept sufficiently clear of the water, and
- following the manufacturer’s instructions for maintenance and servicing that must be attached to and accompany their PFD.

Please see page 3 of this Notice regarding the effect of cold water shock and what a correctly sized and worn lifejacket can do for a person.

Legal requirements

All Fishing Vessels:

To remind owners, skippers and crew of the legal requirements^{1&2} that:

- every fishing vessel shall carry a suitable personal flotation device (PFD) for every person onboard,
- every person onboard a fishing vessel must wear a suitable PFD when on the deck of the vessel, or, in the case of an open undecked vessel, on board the vessel, whether at sea, in harbour or coming to and from moorings, and
- the skipper of a fishing vessel must take all reasonable steps to ensure that every crew member on board wears a suitable PFD.

As per the [Code of Practice](#) for Fishing Vessels of less than 15m length overall the following requirements also apply:

- An approved Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) capable of transmitting a distress alert on the 406 MHz band shall be provided for each person on-board and shall be carried by each person on deck at all times. Each PLB should be ready to be manually activated.
- Every PLB must be correctly registered with ComReg as per [Marine Notice No. 25 of 2010](#) "Personal Locator Beacons (PLB) Registry" or any subsequent Marine Notice that may apply.

All Commercial Ships, except Fishing Vessels:

- To remind every employer of their legal duty³ to their employees to provide such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of persons aboard ship, and
- To remind every employee of their legal duty³ to take reasonable care for the health and the safety of themselves and of other persons aboard ship.

Marine Notice No. 39 of 2013 - – Wear a Personal Flotation Device and increase your chance of survival in the event of entering the water.

Further detail on the wearing and carrying of PFDs in the fishing and commercial vessel sectors is contained in [Marine Notice No. 39 of 2013](#). This Marine Notice is addressed to all owners, charterers, masters, skippers and crew of fishing and commercial vessels **but also contains relevant information for the recreational sector**. It reminds the target group of the legal requirements in relation to the wearing and carrying of PFDs, raises awareness about the different types and performance standards for PFDs, offers an extensive question-and-answer section on the operation of PFDs and gives detailed advice on the selection, servicing and maintenance of PFDs.

¹ Fishing Vessel (Personal Flotation Devices) Regulations, 2001 – S.I. No.586 of 2001.

² Fishing Vessel (Personal Flotation Devices) (Amendment) Regulations, 2008 – S.I. No.63 of 2008.

³ Merchant Shipping (Health and Safety: General Duties) Regulations, 1988 – S.I. No.109 of 1988.

Cold water shock kills

Stage 1: Cold shock (3–5 minutes)

Stage 2: Swimming failure (3-30 minutes)

Stage 3: Hypothermia (after 30 minutes)

Stage 4: Post rescue collapse (during or hours after rescue)

What does a correctly sized and worn lifejacket DO for YOU?

Makes YOU feel safe

Keeps YOU alive

Stops YOU from panicking

Supports YOU even when unconscious

Supports and protects YOU until help arrives

But only if you keep YOUR lifejacket from riding-up!

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For any technical assistance in relation to this Marine Notice, please contact:
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