

Inflatable Personal Flotation Devices

Inflatable PFDs do not meet the U.S. carriage requirements unless the inflatable PFD is actually being worn. Inflatable PFDs are designed for adults weighing over 80 lbs with a chest size of 30-52". An inflated over-the-shoulder inflatable PFD immobilizes the head area similar to a collar, so it would actually stabilize some neck injuries. Most over-the-shoulder inflatable PFDs have more buoyancy (35 pounds) which would physically raise the person's body higher out of the water than most standard foam core life jackets (22 pounds buoyancy).

Cons: Do not use below freezing. Currently there are no inflatable PFDs that are USCG approved for use by youth under 16 years of age. Hard to swim in an inflated PFD. Not recommended for whitewater where sharp rocks could puncture the air bladder. Not for repeated capsizes—once inflated need to install a replacement CO2 cartridge. Should not be used by non-swimmers in case inflation of the air bladder is needed by blowing into inflation tube. Air bladder must not be partially inflated when CO2 cartridge is activated or bladder may explode.



Over-the-shoulder hydrostatic activation inflatable PFD

Cons: water pressure activated inflation device may not inflate if a person is floating face down while wearing waterproof clothing under the PFD since it requires 4 inches water pressure to activate.



Over-the-shoulder PFD automatic inflating pill-in-a-bobbin.

Cons: can accidentally inflate by splashing water or rain which may dissolve the pill.



Over-the-shoulder inflatable PFD (photo showing inflated)



Note: A Belt-Pack must be worn on the lap (not on the back), since once inflated it must be pulled over one's head.



Belt-Pack manual inflatable PFD

Belt-Pack inflatable PFD (inflated)

Cons: Belt-Pack PFDs requires the manual pulling of a lanyard tab to inflate (does not automatically inflate when immersed). Once inflated the air bladder must be pulled over your head & the straps connected.



Re-Arming Kit

Order the appropriate size CO2 cartridge—33 Gram / 24 gram / 16 gram cylinders



Belt manual inflatable buoyancy aid PFD

Cons: Buoyancy aids PFDs requires the manual pulling of a lanyard tab to inflate. Not recommended for non-swimmers or weak swimmers. Requires the conscious holding of the inflated air bladder.



Buoyancy aid PFD (inflated)

Stearns Manual Inflatable USCG approved buoyancy aid:

This is a U.S. Coast Guard approved buoyancy aid.
You cannot put it on like a life jacket.



Manufacturer's website :

[http://
www.stearnsflotation.com/0340-
16-Gram-Manual-Belt-Pack-
Series-
P238C19.aspx#.VqmVXuBumck](http://www.stearnsflotation.com/0340-16-Gram-Manual-Belt-Pack-Series-P238C19.aspx#.VqmVXuBumck)

- Easy-on, belt-style will keep you out of harms way
- Front-mounted inflation bag allows wearer to float on back
- Slim belt design so PFD stays out of the way
- SKU #20000 13885
- 16 gram CO2 cartridge
- Re-arm with Stearns® rearming kit #0925
- Made in the USA
- 1-800-835-3278



Manufacturer's Notes on the Stearns 0340—16 gram Manual Belt Pack Series:

- This PFD requires the manual pulling of a lanyard tab to inflate (does not automatically inflate when immersed).
- Once inflated the air bladder must be pulled over your head & straps connected.
- Suitable for calm, inland water where there is a good chance of fast rescue.
- Designed for adults weighing over 80 lbs with a chest size of 30" to 52".
- Not recommended for non-swimmers or weak swimmers.
- Users of inflatable PFDs must be at least 16 years of age.
- Do not use below freezing.
- *Inflatable PFDs do not meet the U.S. Coast Guard PFD carriage requirements unless the inflatable PFD is being worn.*
- Owner's Manual Model 0340 <http://www.stearnsflotation.com/manuals.aspx>

ABCs of PFDs

There's a Reason They Call 'Em "Life Jackets"

We're often asked, "What's the best life jacket?" The best answer we can give is, "The one you're wearing when you need it." And you're much more likely to be wearing it if it fits well and is comfortable enough to wear all day while you're on the water. We carry a wide array of models to ensure there's a good fit for all body types and builds.

Even if you're a good swimmer, a life jacket (often referred to as a PFD, for Personal Flotation Device) gives you that extra margin of safety while boating. Especially in aerated whitewater or when the water is cold, a properly chosen and fitted PFD can literally be the difference between life and death.

Most adults in a bathing suit need seven to 12 pounds of extra flotation to keep their head out of the water. The US Coast Guard specifies a minimum of 15-½ pounds flotation in an adult PFD. If you're a swimmer and comfortable in the water, a jacket with 16-18 pounds of design flotation should be fine for you. If you're a non-swimmer, you may feel more secure in a higher flotation model, one in the 22-27 pound range. The more muscle you have, the more flotation you need.

The more flotation in a jacket, the higher you float and the faster you pop to the surface. However, that additional flotation makes the jacket bulkier and possibly less comfortable. Again, finding a PFD you're comfortable in is the most important criteria. All our jackets exceed the Coast Guard flotation minimum. The highest flotation jacket in the world won't do you any good if you're not wearing it when it's needed!

In addition to flotation, here are a few things to look for when choosing your PFD:

- Multiple adjustment points help in customizing the fit to your body. Start with the lowest adjustment point, generally at the waist, and then work up the jacket tightening them in turn, the shoulder straps last. It needs to fit snugly, so it doesn't slip over your head when you enter the water.
- Large armholes allow for active movement in rowing and paddling.
- Lash tabs and other attachment points for securing a knife, strobe or other accessory to the outside of the jacket.
- Pockets for stowing articles you want easy access to.
- Reflective tape or piping on touring jackets to make you more visible to motorized craft.
- If you have a kayak seat back that interferes with your PFD, look for a model with reduced foam thickness or mesh in the lower back of the jacket.
- Bright colors make you more visible.

Children's bodies are tricky to fit with a PFD; to work right it must fit snugly. To check for a good fit, carefully pick the child up by the shoulders of the PFD. If the PFD fits right, the child's chin and ears will not slip through. A jacket with leg straps helps prevent ride-up, giving an extra measure of safety.