



## AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION

The **American Canoe Association (ACA)** is a member-based nonprofit organization (501(c)3) that promotes fun and responsible canoeing, kayaking, and rafting. Founded in 1880, the ACA actively advocates recreational access and stewardship of America's water trails. For more information and to become a member, visit [www.americancanoe.org](http://www.americancanoe.org).



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Making the world a better place to paddle. Since 1880.

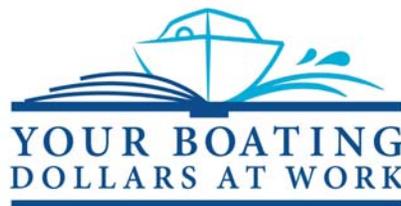
# Wear It! Lifejackets Matter



## Fatality Statistics

- **85%** of canoe fatalities were not wearing a lifejacket
- **48%** of kayak fatalities were not wearing a lifejacket
- Experienced paddlers are four times as likely to wear their lifejackets.
- Lifejackets not only provide additional flotation in case of a capsize or unexpected swim, they also provide an essential layer of warmth in cold water.

Wear It! Lifejackets Matter



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Part of ACA's Paddle Safe, Paddle Smart Series

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## Wear It! Lifejackets Matter

Expect to capsize and swim occasionally when paddling a canoe, kayak or raft - it's part of the sport! But when you hit the water unexpectedly, even strong swimmers need a lifejacket, also known as a personal flotation device (PFD). It allows you to concentrate on doing what's needed to execute a self rescue and will allow you to assist others.

Nearly 70% of all drowning involving canoes, kayaks or rafts might have been avoided if the victim had been wearing a lifejacket!

Because paddlers wear their lifejackets all day, make sure yours has a secure, yet comfortable, fit. When wearing a lifejacket properly you will hardly know you have it on. Although all USCG-approved lifejackets meet certain strength and buoyancy standards, they are NOT all the same. Spend some extra money for a higher-quality model. It will have softer foam, a more comfortable fit and improved adjustability.

### It's the Law!

- Federal and State laws dictate when lifejacket use is necessary.
- Where no state laws exist, federal law requires that children under the age of 13 wear a life jacket on a recreational boat, unless the child is below deck, in an enclosed cabin, or if the boat is not under way. Since most paddlecraft don't have decks below or cabins, this means all the time when in use.
- Check with your state boating officials regarding your state requirements. Set a good example for youngsters: Wear Your Lifejacket.

Many people think that a lifejacket is bulky, smelly and uncomfortable, but that just isn't true anymore. The U.S. Coast Guard places lifejackets into appropriate categories for use.

#### Type I - Offshore Lifejacket

*This PFD is designed for extended survival in rough, open water.*



#### Type II - Near Shore Bouyant Vest

*This "classic" PFD is for calm inland water where there is chance of fast rescue.*



#### Type III - Flotation Aid

*These life jackets are generally considered the most comfortable, and is recommended for paddlesports*



#### Type IV - Throwable Device

*These are designed to be thrown to a person in the water. Throwable devices include boat cushions, ring buoys, and horseshoe buoys. They are not designed to be worn and must be supplemented by wearable PFD.*



#### Type V - Special Use Lifejacket

*Special use PFDs include rescue vests, work vests, deck suits, and hybrids for restricted use. Hybrid vests contain some internal buoyancy and are inflatable to provide additional flotation.*



#### Inflatables (Type III and V)

*Inflatable lifejackets are comfortable, easily seen when inflated and turn most paddlers face-up when properly used.*



*Lifejacket Images courtesy of National Safe Boating Council*