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Standard Guide for Water Rescue Personal Flotation Device (PFD)¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide covers the minimum performance and safety requirements of a water rescue lifejacket/PFD (Personal Flotation Device).

1.2 In recognition of many broad and varied applications of such PFD's, many options are included.

1.3 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *Code of Federal Regulations:*

160.047 Buoyant Vests²

160.052 Buoyant Vests²

160.053 Work Vests²

160.060 Buoyant Vests²

160.064 Marine Buoyant Devices²

160.076 Inflatable Lifejackets²

160.077 Hybrid Inflatable Personal Flotation Device²

160.071 Immersion Suits²

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions:*

3.1.1 *Personal Flotation Device, PFD, n*—a buoyant device suitable for use by one person in water emergencies. These devices may be vests, ring buoys, life preservers, cushions, and other special purpose buoyant devices.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This guide is applicable to all water rescue situations. The water situation, weather situation, and size of rescuer, will dictate what type of PFD to utilize.

4.2 This guide will assist government agencies; state, local, or regional organizations; fire departments; rescue teams; and others who are responsible for purchasing and equipping personnel who respond to water emergencies.

4.3 This guide establishes criteria that shall be considered in the performance, specification, purchase, and acceptance testing of a water rescue PFD.

5. Classification

5.1 This guide includes the following types of PFD's:

5.1.1 *Type I*—Off Shore Life Preserver.

5.1.2 *Type II*—Near Shore Buoyant Vest.

5.1.3 *Type III*—Special Purpose Flotation Aid.

5.1.4 *Type IV*—Throwable Devices.

5.1.5 *Type V*—Special Use Devices.

6. General Requirements

6.1 All PFD's should conform to standards set by the appropriate national regulatory authority, that is, the U.S. Coast Guard in the United States, and be in good and serviceable condition.

7. Performance Requirements

7.1 Highly visible.

7.2 Adequate flotation for individual and water rescue situation.

7.3 Proper size and fit for individual.

7.4 Offer unrestricted mobility.

7.5 Construction allows for impact protection for rescuer utilizing foam panels.

7.5.1 Design offers protection from hypothermia and heat illness associated with use.

7.5.2 Multiple closure devices for a secure fit.

8. Keywords

8.1 lifejacket; PFD; water rescue

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F32 on Search and Rescue and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F32.01 on Equipment, Testing, and Maintenance.

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² Title 33 and Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations. Copies available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, 732 N. Capitol St., NW, Mail Stop: SDE, Washington, DC 20401.