

Why should people of all ages wear life jackets?

Drowning is swift, occuring in as little as 30 seconds, and silent. In 2020, there were 102 unintentional drownings in Washington state. Drowning is a leading cause of unintentional injury and death for children and teens age 1 to 17 in in Washington. Safety is for everyone—and drownings are preventable!

When buying a life jacket, check for:

- Coast Guard approval label.
- A snug fit. With the life jacket on, raise your arms over your head. Look to the left and right; the chest part of the jacket shouldn't hit the chin.
- Head support for younger children. A well designed life jacketwill support the child's head when the child is in the water.
- A strap between the legs for younger children will help prevent the life jacket from coming off.
- Appropriate type of activity and water conditions.
 Check the label or ask the salesperson for help.
- Comfort, appearance and bright colors. This is especially important to teens who may be less likely to want to wear a life jacket. Bright colors make it easier to see a person in the water

Guidelines for wearing life jackets:

Even if you or your child knows how to swim, children, teens and adults should always wear a life jacket:

- When on a boat, raft or inner tube
- When swimming in open water like a lake, river or the ocean
- When playing in or near the water and on docks (for young children)
- When participating in water activities such as paddle boarding, skiing, surfing, wind surfing or jet-skiing

How do you use a life jacket?

- Every spring, check the life jacket for fit as well as wear and tear. Throw it away if you find air leakage, mildew, rot, or rust, or if buckles or straps don't work.
- Practice wearing your life jacket in the water. Make sure your jacket works for you as designed.
- Never substitute toys, such as water wings or plastic rings, for a life jacket.

Please remember:

A life jacket does not take the place of supervision!



Visit the Inland Northwest Drowning Prevention Coalition at indpc.org for more water safety information.





& the Washington State Drowning Prevention Network

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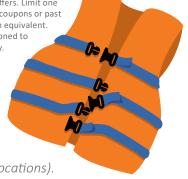


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