

TECHNICAL LEAFLET



SAFE USE & MAINTENANCE OF LIFE JACKETS

Man overboard

Safety is always an important spearhead in the policy of the European inland shipping organizations. Dozens of times a year those on board of inland vessels end up in the water.

Life jackets play a vital role in the safety of those on board when they go overboard. Hypothermia, bumping of the head and becoming unwell can cause life-threatening situations. A life jacket ensures, among other things, that the head stays above water and that the drowning person is easier to find in the (often cold and dark) water. In addition, wearing a life jacket is mandatory in commercial shipping.

This publication provides information on the proper use and maintenance of life jackets on board.

Purchase of a life jacket

A life jacket must meet:

- ▶ Requirements of art. 13.08 [ES-TRIN](#)
- ▶ [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/425](#)

Pay attention to:

- ▶ Correct category, model & measurements
- ▶ The weight of the wearer
- ▶ The instructions of use

The regulations require life jackets of **150N**. However, **275N** is recommended for heavy work clothing. This gives more tilting power and there is little difference in price.



Technical product

An automatically inflatable life jacket is considered a technical product and therefore requires attention and maintenance:

- ▶ Before purchase, check the requirements.
- ▶ Check the jacket before each use.
- ▶ Three monthly (visual) check-ups.
- ▶ Periodic inspection by an accredited station.

Check before every use

- ▶ Check the life jacket visually for defects and with hands for sharp protrusions.
- ▶ Check the gas cartridge and that it is hand-tightened to the trigger.
- ▶ Check the automatic activation on the green indicator. If the indicator is red or missing, the life jacket is not operational.
- ▶ Wear the life jacket according to the enclosed instructions.



Did you know that?

... the lifespan of a life jacket is approx. 10 years?

Material ages and can crack over time, so that the tightness of the float can no longer be guaranteed.

Consult the manufacturer for the lifespan and maintenance instructions.

Three monthly check-ups

Every 3 months, check the vests for general condition and have a number of parts in stock, such as the automatic activation mechanisms, melting tablets and gas cartridges.

- ▶ Inspect the life jacket for visible defects and sharp external influences.
- ▶ Check the gas cartridge for corrosion and puncture.
- ▶ Check the automatic activation mechanism and the melting tablet.
- ▶ Check the status of the mechanism and that all indicators are green.
- ▶ View the general status of the jacket and carefully check the instructions for use.
- ▶ Check the last inspected date.
- ▶ Always have damage repaired by the dealer, do not carry out repairs yourself.



Tips for correct use of the life jacket

The tips below contribute to the safety and comfort of the life jacket:

- ▶ Many life jackets crawl up in the water, which is dangerous. Therefore, make sure that a fist just fits between the chest straps and the body.
- ▶ If prescribed, always use the cross straps, otherwise the jacket may slip during inflation.
- ▶ Air accumulation in work clothing adversely affects the operation of the jacket. Always wear the life jacket over clothing.
- ▶ Wear the life jacket consistently. Due to habituation, any discomfort often disappears on its own.
- ▶ A life jacket offers protection, but can also pose a danger. For example, make sure you do not get between rotating parts, such as a winch.

Inspection interval and inspection stations

The manufacturer can advise you on the inspection interval and the approved inspection stations. You can also find information about this in the jacket's instructions for use and on the manufacturer's website. For most life jackets, professional and intensive use requires an annual inspection by a recognized station. After inspection of the jacket, read the additions and comments on the certificate.

Life jacket maintenance is a joint responsibility of the skipper, crew and safety management. Make sure you have good control and backup.

Life jackets & children

Here are a few tips for protecting your children on board:



- ▶ The jacket should never be too big. Test the correct size by putting on the vest and lifting the child by the jacket. The nose should not come under the zipper.
- ▶ Children's jackets of 100N are ideal when wearing shorts and t-shirt. With more clothes, you should use a heavier category.
- ▶ Always use the cross straps.
- ▶ Check the life jackets by putting them in the water for 24 hours. When these fill up with water, they need to be replaced.
- ▶ Also put jackets in the car. Most accidents happen during boarding and disembarking.
- ▶ Also don't forget about your pets, there are special solutions for pets.

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