

DOES IT FIT?

How To Properly Fit a Life Jacket

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Boating season seems like it's a long way off, but you want to make sure your kids are ready **BEFORE** you get the boat out of storage.

Kids grow **FAST**, so you want to check if their life jackets are in good shape and fit properly every time you go out on or near the water. Kids under age 10 are required by law (in Minnesota) to **WEAR** a life jacket. Everyone **SHOULD** always wear it!!

Here are a few checkpoints:

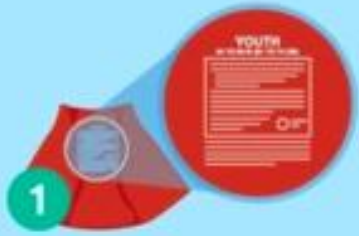
- Does it fit properly? See below for how to check them. A life jacket that is too big or too small will not save a life.
- Do all the buckles snap and unsnap easily?
- Does the zipper zip up and down with ease?
- Don't forget to check the crotch strap if it has one.
- Is the material sunfaded or torn?
- Is the foam soft and bendable?

A faded, torn, or stiff life jacket could fall apart on impact. These must be replaced. Don't just throw the old jackets in the trash. Cut them apart so someone else can't use it.

Outgrown jackets can be passed on to a smaller family member, neighbor, or you can donate them to the US Coast Guard Auxiliary. Many areas have loaner life jacket programs where you can borrow a child's life jacket for free. (Duluth and Warroad, MN are two examples).

More information is available at <http://www.boatus.org> or <https://uscgboating.org/recreational-boaters/life-jacket-wear-wearing-your-life-jacket.php>

HOW TO PROPERLY FIT A LIFE JACKET



CHECK LIFE JACKET LABEL FOR THE APPROPRIATE WEIGHT OR CHEST SIZE.

The life jacket label will indicate the size and weight of the intended user. Make sure the wearer is within these ranges. Verify that the life jacket label states it is "Coast Guard approved."



PUT THE LIFE JACKET ON.

Inspect the life jacket for wear and tear. Warning signs include rips and missing or broken buckles or straps.



BUCKLE ALL STRAPS AND TIGHTEN OR ZIP UP ALL ZIPPERS.

Make sure all straps can be buckled and zippers zipped. Don't forget the crotch strap if there is one!



HAVE THE WEARER LIFT THEIR ARMS OVER HEAD AND GENTLY LIFT THEM BY THE TOP OF THE LIFE JACKET ARM OPENINGS.

If the jacket rides up above their ears, it's too big. If the straps or zippers don't close, the jacket is too small.

