



ISA Guidelines on the use of Personal Floatation Devices (PFD)

The ISA considers that a person's personal safety is primarily the responsibility of that person. However, there are additional responsibilities attached to:

- The skipper of a boat with regard to the members of their crew.
- Children or vulnerable adults who may be unable to make appropriate choices for themselves.

All people going afloat on Irish waters need to be aware of those circumstances when wearing a suitable PFD is required by law. These include:

- Anyone on board an open boat that is under 7 meters in length
- Anyone on deck on a boat that is under 7 meters length
- Anyone under the age of 16 on board an open boat or on deck of any other type of boat
- Anyone being towed in another boat or on any other device (skis, donuts etc.)
- Anyone on a personal watercraft (jet ski)

Except when

- Tied up alongside or made fast to an anchor, marina, pier or mooring
- Immediately prior to, during and after swimming from a boat that is not moving through the water
- Putting on, wearing or taking off diving equipment on a boat that is not moving through the water

There also must be a suitable PFD for everyone on board any boat.

As a general principal, the ISA recommends that an appropriate PFD is worn by *anyone on board any open boat, or while on deck of any other boat, irrespective of the size of the boat*. PFDs should only be removed temporarily when circumstances allow this to be done safely.

The ISA recommends that PFDs used should be:

- Of an appropriate type for the activity
- Of an appropriate size and fitted correctly
- Properly maintained and cared for

The use of PFDs by people, particularly children and non swimmers, when onshore and in the vicinity of the water is strongly recommended.

People on board vessels that are unlikely to capsize such as motor boats and keelboats should consider the use of safety harnesses in addition to a PFD. To do so may prevent them falling overboard when on deck in rough weather, at night and when sailing short handed.

All ISA affiliated organisations and Training Centres should have a published policy on the use of PFDs within facilities & activities managed or run by that organisation. The ISA will help draft a policy if required.

The ISA recognises that in some circumstances advanced windsurfers may choose not to use a PFD as to do so may adversely affect their safety, particularly when sailing in surf.