

INFLATABLE LIFE JACKET FAQs



1. I do not know how to swim. Should I use an inflatable life jacket?

No. A poor or non-swimmer could panic in an unexpected fall into the water and may forget they need to activate the manual “jerk to inflate” cord. Please use an inherently buoyant or hybrid life jacket (has both inherent and inflatable system of buoyancy) that provides flotation without any action on your part.

2. Is there an age requirement for inflatable life jackets?

Yes. Inflatables are only approved for use by people age 16 years and older. People under the age of 16 must have an inherently buoyant or hybrid life jacket in their size range, and it should be properly worn.

3. Are inflatable life jackets approved for all boating activities?

No. Full inflatable life jackets are not approved for high-speed activities such as riding on a personal watercraft, waterskiing or tubing, participating in whitewater activities, or working in commercial boating activities (please wear an inherently buoyant life jacket).

4. Will any CO₂ cylinder work from a store?

No. It is important to use a rearm kit that includes a cylinder that is supplied by the maker of the life jacket. The correct cylinder to use will be indicated on the life jacket itself and in the owner’s manual, and can be obtained by contacting the life jacket manufacturer.

5. Can I use my CO₂ cylinder more than once?

No. Once the cylinder has been punctured, all of the gas will escape into the chamber. This is why you need to check to see if the cylinder is full before each outing. If your device has a Cylinder Seal Indicator, it will show GREEN if the cylinder is full. If it shows RED, you must replace the cylinder.

6. Can I carry inflatable life jackets on an airplane?

Most airlines will permit you to check in or carry on up to two cylinders in the life jackets and two spares. However, you should check with your individual airline to confirm its policy. To avoid an accidental discharge, it is advisable to disarm your inflatable before carrying it on board or checking in with the airlines.

7. Can an inflatable life jacket be worn under clothes?

It’s important to know that inflatable life jackets can never be worn under clothing, including coats or jackets. If so, the life jacket would function ineffectively and could lead to serious injury, discomfort or difficulty breathing.

8. How do I maintain my inflatable life jacket?

Frequent inspections are important. Inspection would include orally inflating the life jacket and ensuring it holds air for 16-24 hours, inspecting the cylinder (not discharged and no corrosion), and checking that the cylinder is screwed in tight. Always refer to the owner’s manual.

9. How do I store my inflatable life jacket?

Please store an inflatable life jacket in a cool, dry area, out of direct sunlight and away from exposure to gas or oil.

10. How do I know if my inflatable life jacket is U.S. Coast Guard approved?

Always check the label. It will indicate if the inflatable life jacket has to be worn, or not, to be legal. In any case, the inflatable should always be worn in order for it to provide the protection you’ll need should you find yourself suddenly and unexpectedly in the water.