

## *Life Jackets*

State regulations often mandate life jacket use. Where state laws do not exist, federal law requires that children under the age of 13 wear a life jacket on a recreational boat unless the child is below deck, in an enclosed cabin, or if the boat is not under way. An appropriate, easily accessible life jacket must be carried for all adults, including those towed behind the craft. BSA policy is more stringent: **Properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets must be worn by all persons engaged in boating activity.**

## Type V—Special-Use Device

The various special-use life jackets are designed for the specific industrial and recreational situations indicated on their labels. Some are multipurpose; that is, a jacket labeled Type V for whitewater use may also serve as a Type III for other uses.

Inflatable and hybrid life jackets may be found in any of the wearable categories. Inflatable devices must be worn to qualify for Coast Guard approval, and are not authorized for use for those less than 16 years of age. That limits their use in Scouting.

## Type IV—Throwable Devices

These personal flotation devices may be thrown to boaters in need. They are to be grasped by a swimmer, not worn. In addition to a wearable life jacket for everyone aboard, federal requirements mandate a Type IV throwable device on any boat 16 feet or longer except canoes, kayaks, and rowing shells.

## Size



Life jackets come in Adult, Youth, Child, and Infant sizes. Check the life jacket label for the appropriate weight range. **Note:** A life jacket whose label is illegible is no longer Coast Guard–approved.

