

Transport Canada
11th Floor, AMSR
Place de Ville, Tower C
330 Sparks Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N5
Email: MSSRegulations-ReglementsSSM@tc.gc.ca

RE: Request for legislation of Mandatory PFD/Lifejacket Wear for all Recreational Boaters

To whom it may concern:

I ask that the *Small Vessel Regulations* be amended to make **lifejacket/PFD wear mandatory for all ages in all recreational vessel types 6 metres or less in length.**

In Canada, approximately 100 people die while boating each year and more than 80% of these victims do not wear a lifejacket or PFD. PFDs/lifejackets, when worn properly, save lives.

Young people (under 18 years old) are nearly twice as likely as adults to wear a lifejacket/PFD while participating in recreational boating activities. The Canadian Drowning Prevention Research Centre (DPRC) data states that death rates in recreational boating incidents are lowest among those under 15 years of age and highest among adults 20 years and older.

The Canadian Drowning Prevention Research Centre (DPRC) report on *Recreational Boating-Related Fatalities in Canada, 2008–2017* states that 51% of fatal recreational boating incidents involved powerboats. The next most common watercraft involved in fatal incidents were canoes (23%). The report tells us that both motorized and human-powered vessels are at equal risk of being involved in fatal recreational boating-related incidents.

Vessel size also plays a role in determining risk. Of the recreational boating-related incidents involving powerboats, 68% involved small vessels (5.5 metres or less) and 23% involved large vessels (longer than 5.5 metres). According to the background information provided by Transport Canada, wear rates for lifejackets/PFDs were lower on board larger vessels compared to smaller vessels.

In order to prevent more boating related drowning fatalities in Canada, I support the mandatory wearing of PFDs and lifejackets for all ages on recreational vessels 6 metres and under in length.

Sincerely,

Quick Facts

Recreational Boating

- Recreational boating-related fatalities occur mostly among adults ([Recreational Boating-Related Fatalities in Canada, 2008–2017](#)).
- 91% of recreational boating-related fatalities between 2008 and 2017 were males ([Recreational Boating-Related Fatalities in Canada, 2008–2017](#)).
- 81% of recreational boating-related fatalities between 2008 and 2017 took place between the months of May through September ([Recreational Boating-Related Fatalities in Canada, 2008–2017](#)).
- 55% of recreational boating-related fatalities between 2008 and 2017 took place in a rural setting ([Recreational Boating-Related Fatalities in Canada, 2008–2017](#)).
- 47% of recreational boating incidents took place over the weekend ([Recreational Boating-Related Fatalities in Canada, 2008–2017](#)).
- Powerboats were involved in 51% of recreational boating-related fatalities between 2008 and 2017 ([Recreational Boating-Related Fatalities in Canada, 2008–2017](#)).
- In 34% of recreational boating-related fatalities between 2008 and 2017, the victim was fishing from the boat before the incident ([Recreational Boating-Related Fatalities in Canada, 2008–2017](#)).
- 37% of recreational-boating related deaths between 2008 and 2017 were multiple-victim incidents where more than one person died as a result of the incident ([Recreational Boating-Related Fatalities in Canada, 2008–2017](#)).
- 92% of survey respondents in a 2021/2022 survey by Environics Research indicate that wearing a lifejacket/PFD is a normal part of boating ([Public opinion research study on boating safety in Canada](#)).
- 76% of survey respondents indicate that if the boat operator was wearing a lifejacket, they would always wear one too. 84% said they would definitely wear a lifejacket if they were a guest on a boat and the operator asked them to wear a lifejacket ([Public opinion research study on boating safety in Canada](#)).
- Drowning fatalities have one of the highest costs per death in Canada, and drowning injuries have the highest cost per emergency department visit (Parachute Canada, [Costs by cause of injury](#)).