

Lifejackets save lives

Why wear a lifejacket?

If you're going afloat for pleasure, working around water or fishing, wear your lifejacket or buoyancy aid. It's useless otherwise.

Accidents can happen at any time in any weather. Good training and common sense help, but lives could be saved every year if people wore correctly-fitted, well-maintained lifejackets or buoyancy aids.

The water around the UK is cold all year round. It's surprisingly difficult to get back on board your boat once you're in the water, and the cold water will affect how your body works.

Wearing a lifejacket with crotch straps and spray hood could **double** your chances of survival, and increase your likelihood of being found.

See how crotch straps make a difference on MCA's [YouTube channel](#).

What happens when you fall into cold water

Your blood pressure increases and you begin gasping for air.

If you're not wearing a lifejacket that lifts your airways out of the water, you can breathe in enough water to drown.

What to do if you fall into cold water

- don't attempt to swim unless you're really close to your boat
- relax as much as you can
- find something to hold onto if you can, while your body adapts and you regain control of your breathing

After this, you should be able to call for help or get back on board quickly. Your rescuers should find it easier to help you if you're wearing a lifejacket.

The activities that need lifejackets the most

Statistics tell us that **commercial fishing, angling** and **sailing** are the activities where most lives might be saved by buoyancy-wear.

Every year a panel of experts meets to analyse the year's fatal maritime incidents. The panel makes a judgment about whether it is probable, possible or unlikely that the person involved could have been saved had they been wearing a lifejacket or buoyancy aid.

Between 2007 and 2010 the panel agreed that 86 lives might have been saved if those involved had been wearing a lifejacket or buoyancy aid.

Make sure that you wear a lifejacket or buoyancy aid as recommended by your sport's national governing body. **Have a great trip, but enjoy it safely.**

Advice for fishermen

MCA recommends that commercial fishermen wear a lifejacket or buoyancy aid at all times whilst on deck.

More information on lifejackets

- [Buy stickers or publications promoting lifejacket wear from MCA](#)
- [The National Water Safety Forum](#)
- The [Royal National Lifeboat Institution \(RNLI\)](#)
- The [Royal Yacht Association \(RYA\)](#)