

Personal Flotation Devices Labeling and Standards

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DHS.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard is issuing this final rule to remove references to type codes in its regulations on the carriage and labeling of Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices (PFDs). Removing these type codes from our regulations will facilitate future incorporation by reference of new industry consensus standards for PFD labeling that more effectively convey safety information, and is a step toward harmonization of our regulations with PFD requirements in Canada and in other countries.

DATES: This final rule is effective October 22, 2014.

The Director of the

PART 175—EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

■ 1. The authority citation for part 175 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 46 U.S.C. 4302; Department of Homeland Security Delegation No. 0170.1.

■ 2. Revise § 175.13 to read as follows:

§ 175.13 Definitions.

As used in this subpart:

Personal flotation device or *PFD*

means a device that is approved by the Commandant under 46 CFR part 160.

Throwable PFD means a PFD that is intended to be thrown to a person in the water. A PFD marked as Type IV or Type V with Type IV performance is considered a throwable PFD. Unless specifically marked otherwise, a wearable PFD is not a throwable PFD.

Wearable PFD means a PFD that is intended to be worn or otherwise attached to the body. A PFD marked as Type I, Type II, Type III, or Type V with Type (I, II or III) performance is

considered a wearable PFD.

■ 3. Amend § 175.15 by revising the introductory text and paragraphs (a) and (b) to read as follows:

§ 175.15 Personal flotation devices required.

Except as provided in §§ 175.17 and 175.25:

(a) No person may use a recreational vessel unless—

(1) At least one wearable PFD is on board for each person;

(2) Each PFD is used in accordance with any requirements on the approval label; and

(3) Each PFD is used in accordance with any requirements in its owner's manual, if the approval label makes reference to such a manual.

(b) No person may use a recreational vessel 16 feet or more in length unless one throwable PFD is onboard in addition to the total number of wearable PFDs required in paragraph (a) of this section.

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■ 4. Revise § 175.17 to read as follows:

§ 175.17 Exemptions.

(a) Canoes and kayaks 16 feet or more in length are exempted from the requirements for carriage of the additional throwable PFD required under § 175.15(b).

(b) Racing shells, rowing sculls, racing canoes, and racing kayaks are exempted from the requirements for carriage of any PFD required under § 175.15.

(c) Sailboards are exempted from the requirements for carriage of any PFD required under § 175.15.

(d) Vessels of the United States used by foreign competitors while practicing for or racing in competition are exempted from the carriage of any PFD required under § 175.15, provided the vessel carries one of the sponsoring

foreign country's acceptable flotation devices for each foreign competitor onboard.

■ 5. Revise § 175.19 to read as follows:

§ 175.19 Stowage.

(a) No person may use a recreational boat unless each wearable PFD required by § 175.15 is readily accessible.

(b) No person may use a recreational boat unless each throwable PFD required by § 175.15 is immediately available.