



NMSC Media Release

18 March 2010

New PFD Standard for Australian Boaters

Australia's marine safety authorities have agreed to accept Personal Flotation Devices made to the new Australian Standard 4758 by 1 July 2010.

The National Marine Safety Committee confirmed that this change will have a minimum impact on boaters as PFDs made to the old Australian standards can continue to be sold after 1 July 2010.

NMSC CEO Margie O'Tarpey explained that some jurisdictions already recognise PFDs made to AS 4758 and by 1 July 2010, this should be the situation nationally.

"AS 4758 is being introduced to more closely align with international standards and takes into account advances in PFD design and manufacture," she said.

Ms O'Tarpey confirmed that the NMSC is aware that new PFDs manufactured to AS 4758 will soon start to appear on retailer's shelves, but cautioned that full market availability of the new product may not be reached until 2011.

PFDs made to AS 4758 are marked as -

- Level 150 – which is similar to inflatable PFD Type 1 and suitable for offshore use
- Level 100 – which is similar to PFD Type 1 and the minimum requirement for offshore use
- Level 50 – which is similar to PFD Type 2
- Level 50 Special Purpose (50S) - to replace PFD Type 3

"Most PFDs made to the old standards will be recognised for many years to come and in the majority of cases, people won't need to replace their existing PFDs as long as they are serviceable," explained Ms O'Tarpey.

However she said that it is important to note that some jurisdictions have applied limits to accepting older existing PFDs based on when they were manufactured.

NMSC recommends that if boaters have an existing PFD made to the old standards, they should check with their local marine safety authority to find out if it is still accepted.

PFDs are recognised as a key safety feature in recreational boating. An NMSC study* found that people who survived a boating incident were more than two times more likely to have been wearing a PFD compared to those who died and concluded that if PFD usage increased to 50%, 2 -3 lives could be saved nationally each year."

For details on PFD laws in your state, please contact your local marine safety authority.

The NMSC aims to achieve nationally uniform marine safety practices and is made up of an Independent Chair and the CEOs of Australia's marine safety agencies.

ends**The National Assessment of Boating Fatalities in Australia 1992 – 1998 Report.* **Media enquiries:** For further information, contact NMSC communications Ursula Bishop on mob: 0412 813 056 or e: ubishop@nmsc.gov.au

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