



### **FLOTATION DEVICE POLICY**

**Only properly fitting U.S. Coast Guard approved lifejackets and flotation vests are allowed in the swimming area at Waukesha County Park System Beaches. Anyone who chooses to wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved lifejacket or flotation vest must remain in shallow water area and must also have an adult in the water within arm's reach at all times. Lifejackets shall never be a substitute for adult supervision! No other flotation devices are allowed, including but not limited to: water wings, noodles, inflatable rafts & toys.**

U.S.C.G Approved Lifejackets and Flotation vests are intended for:

- Open or rough waters, where rescue may be delayed.
- Open and calm waters, where rescue is imminent.
- Use in supervised in pools, waterparks and waterfronts.

Type I, II & III Lifejackets and Flotation vests are the most reliable flotation devices.

- The Type I may help turn an unconscious person from a face down position to a vertical, face up position.
- The Type III may help to keep a conscious person in a vertical, face up position or a slightly tipped back position.
- Inflatable rafts, toys, noodles, water wings are not tested or designated for safety.

Reasonable Modifications & Swim Testing

- Waukesha County has a limited amount of Type III flotation vests that can be provided for use by those who request them due to a disability.
- Individuals with disabilities who need a lifejacket due to a disability must pass the water competency test while wearing a properly fitting lifejacket if they wish to use the deep section. Upon successful completion, they may enter the deep water but must be accompanied by a capable adult within arm's reach at all times. No diving or head first entries are allowed if wearing a lifejacket, and the use of the diving board is not permitted. Only feet first entries off the raft/dock are allowed.

The lifeguard's on duty have the final say in ALL swim testing, water competency and flotation device situations

***Lifejackets shall never be a substitute for adult supervision!***

# ACCEPTABLE FLOTATION DEVICES

Revised 5/27/15

## & THE RATIONALE BEHIND THEM

- 1) There are 5 different types of personal flotation devices categorized for rescue or recreational use by the U.S. Coast Guard. Waukesha County Park System recommends Type I, II, or III Flotation Devices for recreational swimming (pictured below). Next to each flotation device is a brief description on its recommended use and the advantages it offers.

Type	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>I: Life jacket</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intended for boating on open, rough or remote waters where rescue may be slowed or delayed</li> <li>May help to turn an unconscious person from a face-down position to a vertical, face-up position or to a face-up slightly tipped back position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers the most reliable flotation</li> <li>Comes in highly visible colors and may have reflective markings to aid search and rescue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bulky in and out of the water</li> </ul>
<b>II: Buoyant vest</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intended for recreational boating on calm or inland waters where rapid rescue is likely</li> <li>Suitable for supervised use in pools and waterparks</li> <li>May help to turn an unconscious person from a face-down position to a vertical, face-up position or to a face-up slightly tipped back position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More comfortable to wear</li> <li>Available for infants through adults; good choice for children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not recommended for long hours on rough water</li> <li>Less buoyant than a type I life jacket</li> </ul>
<b>III: Flotation vest</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intended for fishing or sailing on calm or inland waters where rapid rescue is likely</li> <li>Suitable for supervised use in pools and waterparks</li> <li>May help to keep a conscious person in a vertical, face-up position or in a face-up slightly tipped back position; wearer may have to tilt the head back to avoid going face-down</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most comfortable to wear continuously</li> <li>Available in many styles</li> <li>Appropriate for boating and specified water activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must be water-tested by inexperienced swimmers before boating</li> <li>Wearer may need to tilt head back to avoid turning face-down in the water</li> </ul>

Source: American Red Cross Swimming & Water Safety Handbook

- 2) It is the duty of the Lifeguard team to ensure that all lifejackets, (both personal and rented) fit properly prior to entrance to the water. Lifejackets are sized according to weight. A properly fitted lifejacket feels comfortably snug. To check for a good fit, pick the child up by the shoulders of the PFD. If the PFD fits right, the child's chin and ears will not slip through. Check to make sure the PFD is in good condition. Buckles/straps should be free of rips or tears. The life jacket should not ride up on the body while in the water. A limited number of life jackets will be available for rent by those who request a modification.
- 3) A Note on recreational flotation devices: Things such as water wings, inner tubes, rafts etc. are not designed or tested for safety and cannot be used as a substitute for a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket and adult supervision. In fact, these pool toys may actually increase a non-swimmer's or an inexperienced swimmer's risk for getting into a dangerous situation in the water by giving them a false sense of security.