

NZDBA PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICE (PFD) POLICY

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1. Overview

This policy applies to NZDBA, and its affiliated RSOs, and their paddlers, sweeps and callers. This policy is for all on-water activity, including paddling and use of a power driven vessel (where applicable). PFDs must be worn at all times any of the aforementioned are on the water.

1.1. Purpose

This document provides an expectation of all paddlers, and water based officials and support crew. It covers devices that can be used to ensure the safety of all involved in dragon boating activities in



New Zealand. Where an international event is held in New Zealand, this policy shall be used for these events.

2. Glossary

NZDBA	New Zealand Dragon Boat Association, the National Sports Organisation
RSO	Any Regional Sporting Organisation that is affiliated to NZDBA
Person	Any paddler, sweep, caller or support boat operator / passenger on any vessel used for dragon boating
PFD	Personal Flotation Device
Support Boat	Boat for use by coaches, umpires, race officials or as a Safety Boat.
Sweep	As per NZDBA Sweep Accreditation Scheme, the person controlling movements of the dragon boat, and responsible for the safety of all on board. Also known as Steer, Steerperson or Helm

3. Responsibilities

These responsibilities are an annual requirement, in alignment with other NZDBA and RSO health and safety requirements.

3.1. RSO Boards

Each RSO is responsible for ensuring this policy is enacted in their local region. If the local marine bylaws impose additional requirements, the RSO must also comply with those.

Each RSO shall appoint a Safety Officer, whose role includes advice and training to teams and paddlers, and monitoring for compliance. The role of Safety Officer can be expanded to comply with other NZDBA Health and Safety policies, and support local health and safety initiatives.

Where an RSO provides PFDs, that RSO's Board must ensure the PFDs are readily available, serviced, ready for use, appropriately intact, and safe for use. PFDs should be checked for signs of damage, wear and tear as per manufacturer's instructions. Where issues are identified which compromise the integrity of the device it must be replaced. Where a PFD is inflatable, checks should also be undertaken on the integrity of the bladder. PFDs that have been inflated shall be reset by an appropriate person, and returned to circulation.

Note, the wearer must notify the board if a PFD has been 'deployed'. Appropriate incident reporting should accompany this, where applicable*.

Where a support boat is operating in a region, the RSO is responsible for ensuring all persons on board know how to correctly don and operate a PFD.

Note: where an RSO is running an event in the off-season the event team will be responsible for ensuring any new paddlers have been shown the correct fit and use.

3.2. Club/team managers

At the beginning of each season it will be the responsibility of the club / team manager to ensure all members of their club have been shown, and can demonstrate, the correct way to fit, size, adjust and use their PFD (note that inflatable PFDs do NOT need to be inflated, but the paddler needs to be shown the location of the inflation tab). The team manager may ask their RSO safety person, or



other person to provide this training. Where new paddlers join during the season the team manager will need to ensure they are given the PFD demonstration before their first time in the boat.

Where clubs / teams provide their members with PFDs it will be the club / teams responsibility to ensure the maintenance of them, as per the RSO responsibilities above. Clubs / teams will also have to ensure inflated PFDs are appropriately reset. If applicable*, an incident report should be completed and forwarded to the RSO.

3.3. Sweeps

As per the NZDBA Sweep Accreditation Scheme, the Sweep is captain of the vessel, so is therefore responsible for the safety of all persons on-board. Sweeps must ensure all persons on their boats are fitted with a PFD before departure. If a paddler is found to be not wearing a PFD, the Sweep must return to shore and only allow the person back on board if they are wearing an appropriate PFD. Failure to do so will result in the Sweep being advised of the breach, and asked to remedy the situation. Repeated breaches by a sweep may result in their accreditation level being dropped by 1 (see appendix 1)

3.4. Paddlers

Paddlers are responsible for ensuring they wear an appropriate fitted PFD any time they are on the water. They must ensure they have been provided with training on the correct use of the PFDs at their first session of the season.

Where a paddler provides their own PFD it will be their responsibility to ensure their seat partner (i.e. the person looking out for them in the event of capsizing) knows how to operate their PFD. They will also be responsible for ensuring it is serviced regularly (e.g. as per manufacturer's instructions for use), and is reset correctly after inflation, where an inflatable PFD is worn.

3.5. NZDBA

NZDBA will oversee the administration of this policy, and support development of local procedures, frameworks and guidelines, as necessary.

Any PFDs owned by NZDBA will be the responsibility of NZDBA to ensure PFDs are serviced as per recommendations, any wear and tear is identified, any unsafe PFDs are removed from use and replaced, and any PFDs inflated are reset appropriately.

The NZDBA National Championships (also referred to as Nationals) is the flagship event organised by the NZDBA Organising Committee (OC). Where PFDs are provided by NZDBA, a designated board member will ensure the PFDs are fit for use. Where PFDs are requested from RSOs for the use during the event the RSO will be responsible for ensuring the appropriate servicing / checks have been carried out. The OC may, at its discretion, request evidence of servicing / checking (note this may be a record from the RSO of who, when, what the count, and any issues identified with appropriate actions taken). NZDBA will be responsible for the PFDs during the event, and will be returned to the RSO(s) at the end of the event. All equipment will be checked in and checked out with a representative of the RSO and NZDBA, in accordance with Memorandum of Understandings agreed upon, and a copy of reports will be sent to the RSO secretary.

*Incident reports should be completed when the PFD is inflated as a result of an incident, near miss or emergency. Incident reports are NOT required for accidental inflations.

4. Devices approved for use

The right PFD for each individual is dependent on their needs. Check the weight range for a device before selecting it. Where an inflatable PFD is preferred, manual inflation is recommended. The following device types are approved by NZDBA, and meet the relevant Maritime laws (AS 4758 / ISO 12402):

4.1. Inflatable horseshoe style (manual)



This type of PFD is designed to fit like a jacket. This is the most commonly provided by RSOs for their paddlers. These devices are inflated by manually pulling a toggle, causing a CO₂ canister to activate, inflating the bladder. This PFD will keep a person's head out of the water, and is rated for open water, but not rough weather. When in open water (e.g. in a harbour, open lake) this type of PFD is recommended. Check that the device is rated to a minimum of 150N for this level of activity.

4.2. Inflatable belt style (manual)



Preferred by paddlers who want less restrictions, this option is worn around the waist. To operate, the person must remove it from the pouch, pull it over their neck, while remaining clipped around the waist, before being inflated. Pulling on the toggle activates the CO₂ canister, causing the device to inflate. This style is designed to hold a person's head out of the water, once fitted and inflated. NOTE this is not an ideal PFD type for someone with low confidence in the water. When in open water (e.g. in a harbour, open lake) this type of PFD is recommended. Check that the device is rated to a minimum of 150N for this level of activity.

4.3. Passive flotation



A device that doesn't require inflation to work is noted in this policy as being passive flotation. These are usually made of a semi-rigid, buoyant material. These are often used when a person may not be worried about restricted movement (e.g. sweep, or support vessel). Selection of this device is dependent on the use. NOTE that **NOT** all of these types are designed to keep the wearer's head out of the water. If a person becomes unconscious, their nose and mouth may still be underwater.



4.4. Automatic Inflatable devices

These devices activate automatically when wet. This may mean the PFD inflates when wet, which may occur as a result of participating in the sport. Alternatively, if a dragon boat were to capsize, it may mean the wearer becomes trapped underneath the upturned boat by the PFDs inflation.

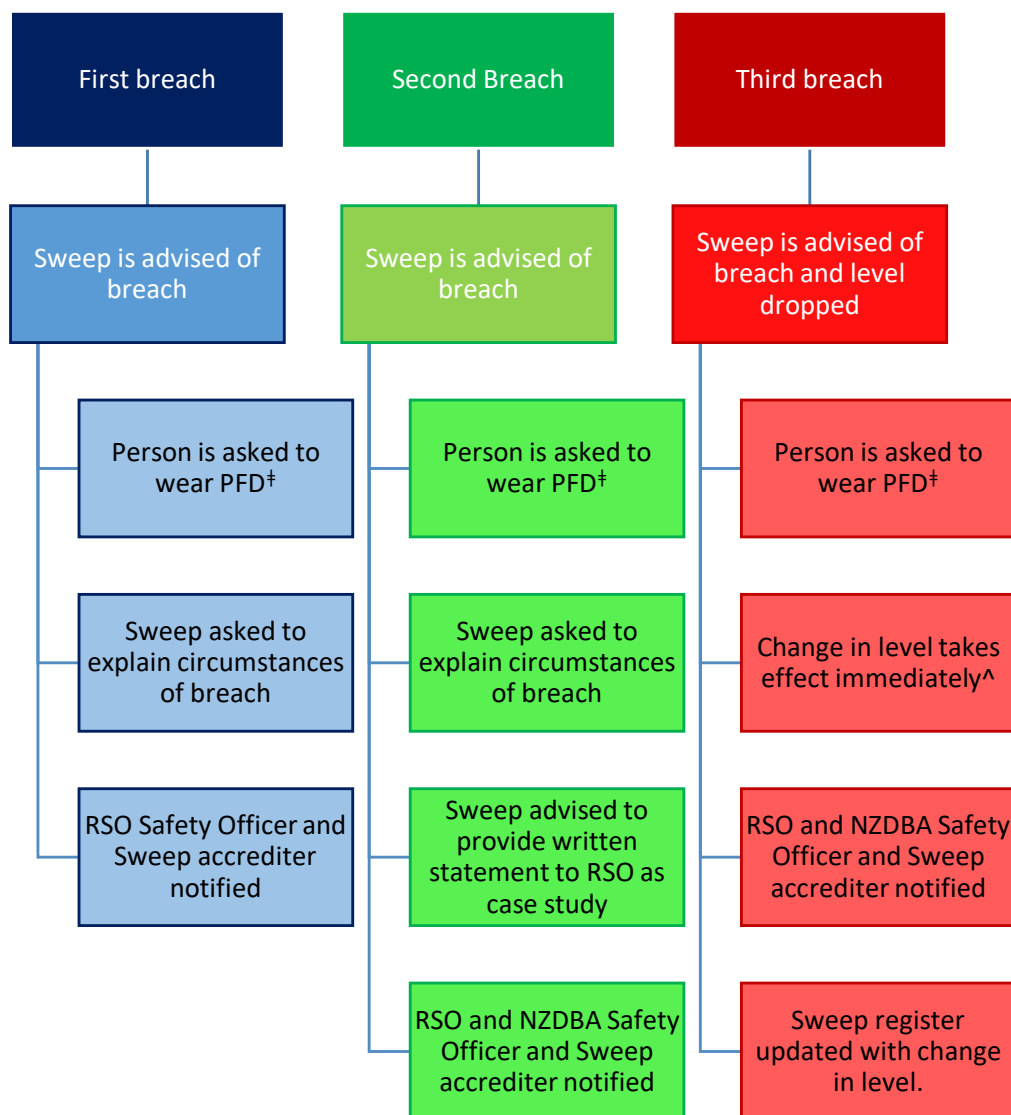
NZDBA DO NOT RECOMMEND THIS DEVICE TYPE FOR DRAGONBOATING

REMEMBER – if you end up in the water, follow the buddy system. Be prepared to have to activate your buddies PFD for them if required, as per capsize guidelines. If you find yourself in a situation where you are unsure if you should activate your PFD, activate it.

5. Associated documents

NZDBA Health and Safety Policy
NZDBA Sweep Accreditation Scheme
Maritime NZ Lifejacket guide
Maritime NZ Rules on the water

Appendix 1 – Response to non-compliance



‡where the person refuses to wear a PFD, they will be asked to step off the boat, and will not be permitted to return until they comply.

^where the level change is applied at or before a championship event, this may prevent the team from qualifying

The RSO Safety Officer will be responsible for keeping records of notifications and breaches. The Sweep accreditation representative and RSO Safety Officer will be required to advise NZDBA Health and Safety advisor, and Sweep Accreditor of the requirement to change levels.