

U.S. Coast Guard announces notice of proposed rulemaking for personal flotation device type codes

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WASHINGTON — The U.S. Coast Guard announced Wednesday publication of a notice of proposed rulemaking to remove references to type codes in its regulations on the carriage and labeling of Coast Guard-approved personal flotation devices (PFDs).

PFD type codes are unique to Coast Guard approval and are not well understood by the general public. The current PFD type code classification system is planned to be redesigned to focus on performance criteria rather than construction standards. A new easy-to-understand label concept is intended to help both professional mariners and recreational boaters select the best device for their intended uses and routes.

Removal of the current PFD type codes from carriage and labeling requirements would assist future incorporation by reference of new industry consensus standards for PFD labeling that will more effectively convey safety information without the use of type codes, and is a step toward harmonization of Coast Guard regulations with PFD requirements in Canada and other countries.

"Lifejackets that are currently Coast Guard-approved and serviceable are still perfectly safe to use and are not made obsolete by the proposed standards. This rule simply streamlines the use of PFD type codes to pave the way for future alignment with one international standard," said Brandi Baldwin, P.E., Lifesaving and Fire Safety Division, Office of Design and Engineering Standards at U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters.

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The notice of proposed rulemaking and related materials may be reviewed at www.regulations.gov, docket number: [US CG-2013-0263](#).

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