

SAFETY BULLETIN No.1 of 2016

Life jackets and kill cords

The Tidal Thames is a challenging river and the tragedy of recent incidents has shown it can be harsh and unforgiving. To ensure you stay safe while enjoying the Thames we recommend you adhere to the following advice:

Life Jackets - Check and wear correctly. It will save your life

If you are in a motorboat you should wear a lifejacket. Accidents can happen to anyone regardless of experience: launch drivers, coaches, coxes and umpires **MUST** wear a correctly fitted and well maintained self-inflating life jacket at all times.

Rowers who cannot swim should also wear a life jacket. Rowing friendly equipment is available.

Fitting

Loose-fitting life jackets may come off in an emergency or be a hindrance in the water. Make sure your jacket is a snug fit and use a crotch strap if fitted. The manual inflation toggle should be easy to reach.

Storage

Life jackets should be stored in a warm, dry place but away from direct heat or sunlight. Hang them up on racks or hooks and never leave them compacted in a bag or box. Allow to air-dry naturally.

Maintenance

Check your jacket for obvious signs of damage and that the gas bottle is correctly fitted every time you wear it. Inflate it at least once a year to test for leaks. Get it serviced regularly by an approved retailer at least once every three years. Repairs must be performed by the manufacturer and a maintenance log kept.

Recommended specification: Minimum 150N capacity; Includes a crotch strap; Self-inflating;

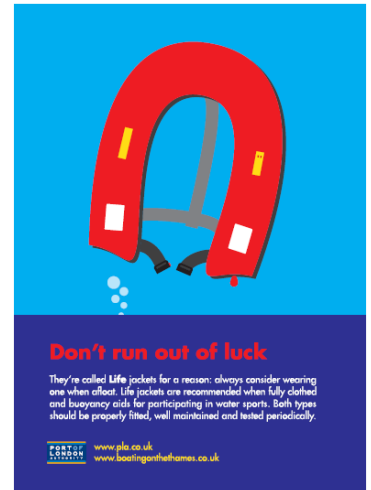
[Note: a buoyancy aid is no replacement for a self inflating life jacket - a buoyancy aid does not keep your face above water if you are unconscious].

Kill Cords

All drivers of open launches should wear an operational kill cord (and carry a spare) securely attached to both driver and engine. Failure to wear a kill cord puts the driver and others at risk.

It is essential to:

- attach the cord securely to your life jacket or around your leg before the engine is started
- test regularly to ensure the engine stops when the kill cord mechanism is operated
- make sure the cord is in good condition
- stop the engine before transferring the kill cord to another driver or removing the kill cord



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Port of London Authority
London River House, Royal Pier Road,
Gravesend, Kent DA12 2BG

DAVID PHILLIPS
CHIEF HARBOUR MASTER



Telephone calls, VHF radio traffic, CCTV and radar traffic images may be recorded in the VTS Centres at Gravesend and Woolwich.

www.pla.co.uk

