
The use of Personal Flotation Devices to prevent drowning

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All over the world and in Singapore, many deaths by drowning that occur during boating happen to people who do not wear a lifejacket or personal flotation device (PFD). There are examples from a number of high profile drowning deaths of Singapore citizens during boating activities both in local waters and overseas in recent years. There are also many examples from other countries including recreation boating drownings in Canada during the 10-year period 1992–2001 where the omission to wear a PFD was said to be the biggest contributing factor.

While there is evidence to show that the odds of survival increase if PFDs are worn, most authorities do not mandate the wearing of PFDs by law even though they usually mandate the presence of PFDs on board boats and watercraft. This paper presents the highlights of the author's research into the wearing of PFDs to prevent drowning and also gives the author's suggestions as to what can be done to have people put on PFDs when they are boating so as to reduce the overall incidents of death by drowning.

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