



Surf Life Saving Australia - Circular

Title:	Mandatory Wearing of Certified Lifejackets in IRBs
Document ID:	Circular 02/14-15
Audience:	Lifesaving members, IRB competition participants, State/Territory Centres
From:	SLSA Capacity and Capability Team
Date:	08/07/2014
Subject:	Specification Update
Summary:	To support the implementation of the mandatory wearing of lifejackets in selected lifesaving operations and Surf Sports IRB competition, SLSA has updated the specification to include manually inflated lifejackets.

Subject to State/Territory Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), the use of manually activated inflatable lifejackets is permitted in SLS IRB lifesaving operations only, following a pre-activity risk assessment indicating they are operating in an acceptably low risk environment*. Any decision to utilise manually activated inflatable lifejackets should be noted in the Powercraft Logbook.

**A nominal wave height of 1m is considered the maximum wave height threshold where manually activated inflatable lifejackets may be worn. Wave height is only one consideration in assessing surf zone hazards (examples of others could include: a heavy shore break, wave period, wind strength and direction) therefore the IRB Driver and IRB crew will be required to complete a risk assessment in determining any decision to wear manually activated inflatable lifejackets in the surf zone.*

Inflatable lifejackets (manually activated and automatically activated) are **not** permitted in Surf Sports competition.

Automatically activated inflatable lifejackets are **not** permitted in SLS lifesaving operations.

Manually activated inflatable lifejackets must be serviced at least every 12 months or at longer intervals in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Implementation Details

For Timeframe, Equipment and Operational requirements this circular should be read in conjunction with the following Bulletins and Circulars:

- SLSA Bulletin 03/13-14 Mandatory Wearing of Certified Lifejackets in IRBs – Lifesaving and Competition
- SLSA Circular 66/13-14 Lifejacket suppliers list - IRB operations and competition

Lifejacket suppliers have been included in the *SLS Approved Gear and Equipment Manual*. The complete gear and equipment manual is located at www.sls.com.au/members/lifesaving/gear-equipment.

These circulars and bulletins can be found in the [Members Portal](#).

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LIFEJACKET

INTRODUCTION

The following specification outlines the requirements for the manufacture and supply of lifejacket for inshore aquatic powercraft activities.

A lifejacket is personal protective equipment that is used by operators of inshore aquatic powercraft, including:

- Inflatable rescue boat (IRB) - Inherently buoyant and manually activated inflatable lifejackets
- Rescue water craft (RWC) - Inherently buoyant lifejackets only

OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

To be fit for surf lifesaving purpose, a lifejacket for inshore aquatic powercraft activities must be able to meet the following requirements:

- Be non-restrictive and streamlined for operational duties including swimming (25m in calm seas), lifting patients and moving in and around powercraft;
- Be suitable for beach and surf conditions (durable to salt water and extreme UV conditions);
- Be easy and quick to fit and remove;
- Optional: Where the lifejacket is to be used for night time operations, it is to have reflective taping on the outside of the jacket;
- Optional: If required, have a securing point for a duty radio on the right collar bone area (Inherently buoyant lifejackets only).

Inflatable lifejackets (manually activated and automatically activated) are **not** permitted in Surf Sports competition

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS:

1. CONSTRUCTION

All lifejackets used for inshore aquatic powercraft activities must be certified and meet International Standard (ISO): 12402 (Personal Flotation Devices) or Australian Standard (AS) 4758 (Personal Flotation Devices).

- The lifejacket is to be lightweight;
- The lifejacket is to be non-obstructive to the throat, neck or face area;
- The lifejacket must not have any sharp edges or materials that may cause injury to the user;
- The lifejacket must be able to be secured as to prevent riding up;
- Any fastening device/s on the lifejacket are to be fashioned in a way to not cause entanglement;
- The lifejacket is to be comfortable to wear.

Inflatable lifejackets must be of the manual activation type only and must be certified and meet International Standard (ISO): 12402 (Personal Flotation Devices) or Australian Standard (AS)4758 (Personal Flotation Devices). Automatically activated inflatable lifejackets are not permitted in SLS lifesaving operations and Surf Sports competition.

2. BRANDING AND COLOUR

The branding and colour of lifejackets for operators of inshore aquatic powercraft are to align with the SLSA Equipment and Uniform Branding Guidelines.