



PARKS AND RECREATION ONTARIO

Date: November 4, 2024

To: MSSRegulations-ReglementsSSM@tc.gc.ca

From: Parks and Recreation Ontario

Subject: Making personal flotation devices/lifejackets mandatory for recreational boaters

Dear Transport Canada:

Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) is a strong advocate for accessible and safe water-based recreation. In Canada, approximately [100 people die while boating each year](#), with over [80% of fatalities occurring in incidents where a lifejacket/PFD was not worn](#). For this reason, PRO recommends that the *Small Vessel Regulation* be amended to make **lifejacket/PFD wear mandatory for all ages, in recreational vessel types 6 metres or less in length**. When worn properly, PFDs and lifejackets save lives.

[Powerboats and canoes present the highest risk](#) for fatal recreational boating incidents in Canada. Of the recreational boating incidents involving powerboats, [68% occurred in small vessels](#) (5.5 metres or less). Whether motor- or human-powered, lifejacket/PFD use is the most effective method for minimizing the risk of recreational boating-related fatalities.

Death rates in recreational boating incidents are [highest among adults](#) and [lowest among those under 15 years old](#). Consequently, lifejacket/PFD wear rates among young people (under 18 years old) are [nearly double that of adults](#). Therefore, this regulatory amendment will only be effective if adults are included amongst parties required to wear lifejackets/PFDs in recreational vessels.

Implementing this regulatory amendment will prevent avoidable deaths, unnecessary trauma, alleviate medical expenses, and ensure that all Canadians can safely enjoy water-based recreation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this important proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kim Gavine'.

Kim Gavine
Chief Executive Officer
Parks and Recreation Ontario

prontario.org

1 Concorde Gate, Suite 302, Toronto ON M3C 3N6