

The Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW "Promoting Sustainable Fishing"

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Inflatable Personal Floatation Devices

The Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW has been investigating the compliance issues associated with renewing out of date inflatable personal floatation devices (PFD's). Inflatable PFD's are becoming popular with boat owners and are also being used by those fishing off the rocks.

After discussions with NSW Maritime it was confirmed that an inflatable personal floatation device (PFD) is required to be serviced in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions (Clause 83(4) *Marine Safety (Gen) Reg 2009*).

Knowing this, the legislation does not stipulate that all lifejackets need to be serviced by an authorised service agent. In fact the legislation allows for the PFD to be serviced by the owner in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.

How do you know the manufacturers' instruction?

In most cases the manufacturers do not issue any sort of servicing instructions, apart from directives on how to use and take care of your inflatable PFD.

Some PFD manufacturers although, do issue do it yourself (DIY) service kits. These kits clearly point out the requirements of a compliant inflatable PFD by the manufacturer and in accordance with the legislation. If the PFD is a brand for which manufacturers issue a self service kit, then the owner can service it themselves by the use of the kit.

If the inflatable PFD you purchase does not have a DIY service kit, then the PFD can not be serviced and made compliant by the owner. So in the absence of any servicing documentation from the manufacturer, the PFD must be serviced by a qualified service agent.

If you are unsure, the Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW recommends that you service your inflatable PFD annually to comply with NSW Maritime requirements.

NSW Maritime Policy

NSW Maritime has determined that the above description of a compliant or non compliant inflatable PFD in accordance with the legislation be the standing policy. In the interim, all inflatable PFD servicing breaches will be considered an offence and will be dealt with by issuing a formal warning only, unless otherwise approved by NSW Maritime Legal Branch.

NSW Maritime has accepted that a very large number of lifejackets are out of date already prior to sale. NSW Maritime hopes to educate industry with regards to this issue in the near future. NSW Maritime recommends that consumers who purchase an out of date inflatable lifejacket should return the PFD to the store, and have the store re-stamp it as current.