

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Should a crutch strap be worn at all times?

It is strongly advised that it should be. Otherwise you fall into the water, the tendency will be for the lifejacket to come up over your head with the force of inflation and the impact of the water. Then your lifejacket will not be giving you the correct protection and / or supporting your head out of the water.

What is the difference between a floatation suit / buoyancy aid and an inflatable lifejacket?

A floatation garment or buoyancy aid should only be worn on their own, when working close to land and by competent swimmers or where help is close to hand.

An automatic inflation lifejacket should always be worn, ideally together with a floatation garment, when working away from the shore, when the wearer is not a competent swimmer, or when there is no help close to hand.

What is the difference between the different inflation mechanisms on the market and how do they work?

The three main types of automatic inflation mechanism are:

- United Moulders — looks with a firing cartridge containing a cellulose paper that reacts to fire, the mechanism when wet and the cellulose dissolves.
- Halkey Roberts — works with firing cartridge containing a cellulose tablet or “salt bobbin” as it is more commonly know that also reacts to fire, the mechanism when wet and the cellulose compound dissolves.
- Hammar — works with hydrostatically by means of a pressure valve reacting to fire, the mechanism when totally immersed in water to a minimum depth of 10 cm

What is the difference in weight between a 150 Newton and a 275 Newton lifejacket in its undeployed state?

Less than 30 grams, which is very little. The common perception is that a 275 Newton lifejacket is a lot heavier and more cumbersome than a 150 Newton, but this is not the case.

What is the difference between 275 Newton and 150 Newton and how do I decide which I need?

The difference is the level of buoyancy or flotation provided – a 275 Newton having a higher level of buoyancy being nearly double that of 150 Newton.

A 150 Newton should only be used where light weight clothing is being worn and no heavy tools being carried. It is not recommended to be used with a flotation suit or a dry suit as it is possible that it will not self-right you in conjunction with this type of clothing.

A 275 Newton should be used where heavy weight clothing is being worn or tools are being carried, or when wearing a flotation suit or dry suit. All MULLION 275 N lifejackets are compatible with MULLION flotation suits.

Are your lifejackets filled with EN1095 deck safety harness suitable for lifting purposes? E.g. Helicopter rescue?

No, this harness is only designated for use with attachment to a safety line on deck and is not designed or approved for lifting purposes.

I sweat a lot in my flotation suit and find it very warm to wear when working vigorously. Is there any way of making it more comfortable to wear in this respect?

You can reduce any such heat stress by unfastening the centre front zip to a degree (as long as it is not raining otherwise you will get wet).

We also have available breathable flotation suit which reduces heat stress by means of air vents / mesh gussets / extra underarm zips / breathable foam lining. This is our Mullion X5000 Suit.

Will my flotation suit self-right me in the water?

No! A flotation suit will not self-right you in the water if you are facedown. It requires “active self-righting- ie” the wearer to turn themselves. If ‘passive self-righting’ is required then the only way this can be achieved is by wearing an automatic inflatable lifejacket in addition.

My garment incorporates an integral inflatable lifejacket. Does the complete garment have to be returned for servicing?

Ideally yes, as then the service centre can ensure the inflatable bladder / lifejacket can be refilled correctly after service.

How does a floatation suit work?

A floatation suit works by providing inherent buoyancy foam in its lining which floats a wearer in the water.

It also works on the wet-suit principle by allowing a limited amount of water to enter the suit and then by tightening the anti-flushing straps on the arms and legs. The same body of water heats up to the body temperature of the wearer and maintains the core body heat.

How long is a lifejacket guaranteed for?

This depends on the nature and frequency of use (if being used in a leisure environment on an occasional basis and providing it is well looked after and serviced regularly then it may well last for tens of years.

If being used in a heavy duty commercial environment on a regular basis then it may only last 1 – 2 years.

How long will a floatation suit keep me afloat?

Indefinitely – due to the fact that it incorporates stable closed cell buoyancy foam that does not absorb water.

How often do I need to have my floatation suit serviced?

These are essential life-saving products for the protection of your life and should be treated with the appropriate care & respect. Having your lifejacket / floatation garment serviced on a regular basis may cost you money but it is a small price to pay against the value of your life.

What lifejacket should be worn with a floatation suit?

It is strongly recommended that a 275 Newton lifejacket is worn in conjunction with a floatation suit to guarantee self-righting in the water. The inherent buoyancy in a

flotation suit (or the trapped air in a dry suit) will counteract the buoyancy of a lifejacket. Consequently a 150 Newton level of lifejacket is not always guaranteed to turn you as it has less force.

How often should my lifejacket be serviced?

For SOLAS life jackets they must be serviced at an independent approved service centre approved by both the manufacturer and the National Administration. E.g. In the UK this would be the MCA (Maritime & Coastguard Agency). They must be serviced at intervals of 12 months maximum.

For CE life jackets there is no legal requirement for servicing but it is strongly recommended that they are also serviced by an independent approved service centre on an annual basis.

How often do I have to have my lifejackets operating parts changed / what is the life on these parts?

The life / replacement period on the operating parts is as follows:

- SOLAS light: 5 years
- CO2 gas cylinder: 5 years
- United Moulders Firing Cartridge: 3 years
- Halkey Roberts Cellulose Bobbin: 2 years
- Hammar inflation mechanism: 5 years

NB. This is assuring there is no interim damage or corrosion to these parts within this period. If there is, then they should be replaced at this point.

What does Newton buoyancy relate to?

Newton buoyancy basically relates to the amount of upward force or uplift provided by a lifejacket (or flotation suit / buoyancy aid) in the water.

1 Newton = approximately 1 tenth of a kilo (100 grams)

So a 50 Newton buoyancy aid will give 5 kilos of additional uplift in the water; a 150 Newton lifejacket will give 15 kilos of additional uplift; a 275 Newton lifejacket will give 27.5 kilos additional uplift.

How important is a spray hood?

In an offshore environment it is very important as it covers the face and protects all your airways – i.e. ears, nose and mouth from water flushing into them from the wave motion.

It also provides comfort and a degree of thermal protection to the face by keeping it enclosed and covered.

Is my weight a determine factor in the selection of my lifejacket? If I am heavy in weight do I need to buy a 275 N instead of a 150 N?

Not necessarily. Generally speaking larger than average people have more inherent buoyancy in their own bodies and greater lung capacity than smaller people so the additional buoyancy required to support you in the water and self-right you is sometimes less than with a smaller person.

If my floatation suit gets torn or damaged does it have to be replaced?

NO, it does not dramatically affect the thermal floatation properties as long as the tears / holes / cuts are not too big or too numerous.

For example less than 15 cm tears. It is however recommended that these should be patched / repaired as soon as possible to keep the suit working to its optimum level and also to retain the waterproofness for working comfort.

What is the key protection given by a lifejacket?

The key protection factors of a lifejacket are that on water immersion it will:

- Self-right you if you fall in face-down and / or unconscious
- Will support your head and upper torso above the water level to minimize the risk of drowning