

**WAC 296-800-16070 Make sure your employees are protected from drowning.** (1) You must provide and make sure your employees wear personal flotation devices (PFD) when they work in areas where the danger of drowning exists, such as:

- (a) On the water.
- (b) Over the water.
- (c) Alongside the water.

**Note:** Employees are not exposed to the danger of drowning when:  
- Employees are working behind standard height and strength guardrails.  
- Employees are working inside operating cabs or stations that eliminate the possibility of accidentally falling into the water.  
- Employees are wearing an approved safety belt with a lifeline attached that prevents the possibility of accidentally falling into the water.

(2) You must provide your employees with PFDs approved by the United States Coast Guard for use on commercial or merchant vessels. The following are appropriate or allowable United States Coast Guard-approved PFDs:

Type of PFD	General Description
Type I	Off-shore life jacket - Effective for all waters or where rescue may be delayed.
Type II	Near-shore buoyant vest - Intended for calm, inland water or where there is a good chance of quick rescue.
Type III	Flotation aid - Good for calm, inland water, or where there is a good chance of rescue.
Type V	Flotation aids such as boardsailing vests, deck suits, work vests and inflatable PFDs marked for commercial use.

**Note:** • Commercially available PFDs are marked or imprinted with the type of PFD.  
• Type IV PFDs are throwable devices. They are used to aid persons who have fallen into the water.

(3) You must inspect PFDs before and after each use for defects and make sure that defective PFDs are not used.

(4) You must provide approved life rings with an attached line on all docks, walkways, and fixed installations on or adjacent to water more than five feet deep.

(a) Life rings must:

- (i) Be United States Coast Guard approved 30 inch size.
- (ii) Have attached lines that are at least 90 feet in length.
- (iii) Have attached lines at least 1/4 inch in diameter.
- (iv) Have attached lines with a minimum breaking strength of 500 pounds.

(v) Be spaced no more than 200 feet apart.

(vi) Be kept in easily visible and readily accessible locations.

(b) Life rings and attached lines must:

(i) Be maintained to retain at least 75 percent of their designed buoyancy and strength.

(ii) Be provided in the immediate vicinity when employees are assigned work at other casual locations where the risk of drowning exists.

(c) Work assigned over water where the vertical drop from an accidental fall would be more than 50 feet, must be subject to specific procedures as approved by the department.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 49.17.010, 49.17.040, 49.17.050, and 49.17.060. WSR 18-22-116, § 296-800-16070, filed 11/6/18, effective 12/7/18. Statutory Authority: RCW 49.17.010, [49.17].040, and [49.17].050. WSR 02-16-047, § 296-800-16070, filed 8/1/02, effective

10/1/02; WSR 01-11-038, § 296-800-16070, filed 5/9/01, effective  
9/1/01.]