

Caring for your lifejacket

As with all safety and emergency equipment, servicing your lifejacket is most important. Whatever type of lifejacket you use, it will need basic maintenance to keep it working properly.

General inspection and maintenance

At least every six months, all lifejackets should be inflated orally or by hand pump to avoid moisture build up inside the jacket, and left inflated for 24 hours to ensure they hold their pressure and to see if there are any leaks or damage. You can also check straps, Velcro enclosures and folded corners for wear and tear and check that the retro-reflective tape is firmly attached to the jacket surface. At three monthly intervals, check webbing and stitching, all buckles, zips and D-rings and ensure the whistle is securely fastened.

If the jacket is fitted with a light, check its operation and that the battery is in date – replace if necessary. Some lights are salt water activated and must be replaced after use.

The lifejacket should be repacked correctly, as per the manufacturers folding instructions. When not in use, lifejackets should be stored in a dry, well-aired area. Out of season the lifejacket should be opened up, partially inflated (to remove folds) and stored on a non metal coat hanger.

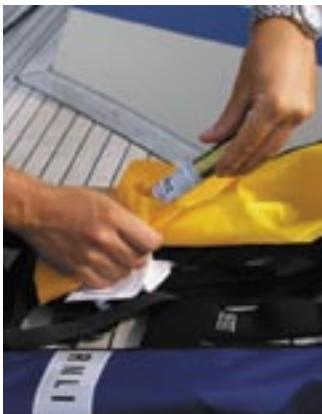


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Lifeboats



Ensure that the gas cylinder is correctly tightened



Check the plastic safety clip is intact

CO₂ cylinder maintenance

The CO₂ cylinder should be checked for corrosion and tightness at least every three months as these cylinders may become loose and fail to operate and corrosion may cause the cylinder to leak.

A monthly tightness check and a three-monthly bottle examination should be carried out.

Remove the cylinder and check the operating head. Test the operation by pulling the lanyard and checking that the firing pin travels forward and returns freely and the pin is not worn or bent. Take care with the plastic safety clip, which is designed to break when operated, and may need to be replaced.

If the cylinder thread is corroded with white powdery deposit, brush it off with a stiff nylon brush and blow out excess particles prior to spraying with a water-repellent lubricant. Also, wipe the cylinder surface with lubricant.

Any part of the jacket that was in contact with rusty cylinder should be checked for damage and may need to be repaired by the manufacturer. On lifejackets fitted with a hydrostatic trigger, the hydrostatic device must be replaced at the correct intervals and particular care must be taken to ensure that the gas cylinder is correctly tightened, as there have been reported instances of the cylinder becoming detached on this type of jacket.

IF ANY PART OF THE CYLINDER HAS A RED, RUSTY SURFACE, IT MUST BE REPLACED IMMEDIATELY

It is advisable to carry a spare re-arming kit onboard in case the lifejacket is accidentally activated.

If you are at all unsure about maintaining your lifejacket, then it should be serviced annually by a qualified agent.



Hydrostatic trigger device and gas cylinder

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