



SHIP SAFETY BULLETIN

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Subject: Carrying lifejackets on board passenger vessels

Purpose

This bulletin is a reminder for passenger vessel owners, masters, crew, and operators that passenger vessels must carry at least one lifejacket of the proper size for each person onboard. This bulletin also reminds parents of infants¹ of the carriage requirements for infant lifejackets on Canadian vessels.

Scope

This bulletin applies to vessels certified to carry passengers that are:

- more than 15 gross tonnage; or
- 15 gross tonnage or less, and carry more than 12 passengers.

Background

The [Life Saving Equipment Regulations](#) (LSER) require passenger vessels to have one lifejacket for each person on board, including enough lifejackets suitable for children. The amount of children's lifejackets passenger vessels must carry are as follows:

- at least 10% of the number of persons authorized to be carried on board; or
- one for each child carried on board.

Whichever estimate provides the higher number is the amount of lifejackets that must be carried.

The LSER does not require Canadian vessels to carry infant lifejackets, as there have been no design standards for these sizes until recently. The proposed Vessel Construction and Equipment Regulations (VCER), once published, will require all passenger vessels 24 metres in length and

¹ An infant lifejacket is for a child less than 100 cm in height and weighing less than 9 kg, as per the International Maritime Organization's International Life-Saving Appliance Code.

Key words:

1. lifejackets
2. children
3. passenger

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above to carry lifejackets for children less than 100 cm in height and weighing less than 9 kg. Until the VCER are published, and the requirements of the *Small Vessel Regulations*² are amended, parents are encouraged to bring their own infant lifejackets when on board any vessel.

Responsibilities of the Master and Authorized Representative

Section 10 of the [*Fire and Boat Drills Regulations*](#) (FBDR) requires the master of a passenger vessel to record the number of persons on board. Additionally, section 11 requires the master of certain³ passenger vessels to record, before departure, passenger details in a way that distinguishes between adults, children and infants⁴.

In order to meet subsection 106(1) of the [*Canada Shipping Act, 2001*](#) (CSA 2001), the authorized representative of the vessel must ensure that procedures are in place for the safe operation of a vessel.

What you need to know

The authorized representative must ensure that a vessel has efficient procedures in place to:

- record the number of persons onboard for each voyage;
- record the name, gender, and age of each person on board⁵; and
- ensure the vessel will depart with enough lifejackets of proper size for all persons on board.

Before leaving, the master must make sure that the vessel has enough lifejackets of proper size for all persons on board.

² The *Small Vessel Regulations* will be amended in due course to include these lifejacket requirements, but until that time, parents are encouraged to bring their own infant lifejackets when on board any vessel.

³ The master of a passenger vessel must, before departing on an unlimited voyage, a near coastal voyage, a voyage longer than 12 hours or a voyage on which there is at least one assigned passenger berth, ensure that the name and gender of each person on board the vessel are recorded in a way that distinguishes between adults, children and infants.

⁴ Transport Canada's Office of Boating Safety recommends that children be weighed at least 9 kg / 20 lbs before they are brought to a vessel.

⁵ For vessels to which section 11 of the FBDR applies, records must be kept on shore in a manner that makes it readily available to search and rescue services, as per subsection 11(2).