

# POWER REPORT

by Wayne Anderson  
Rear Commodore for Power

I'm sitting in the clubhouse enjoying a cup of coffee on a beautiful Sunday morning and it hits me, it's the 20<sup>th</sup>, the Ships Log article is due and I have nothing. That's bad. Wait a minute, today is also Father's Day and I have nothing. That's really bad. Well, let's try that "two birds with one stone" thing.

The year was 1973. The boat was a 15 foot Mark Twain tri-hull. The event? Your Rear Commodore of Power gets his first experience at the helm as a five year old. It still counts if you're on your Dads lap right? The goal that day was to navigate out of what is now known as party cove and set a course for our campsite. After five minutes, all I had was a boat doing an endless series of circles and a frustrated father. I think I can safely say I have acquired a fair amount of boating knowledge since then and a majority of it came from my father while growing up. For that I am grateful.

It's my belief that one of the most important things I learned is that as captain of a boat, the safety of every one onboard is my responsibility. A few weeks ago, yours truly failed at this task. In a nut shell, I left the dock with enough PFD's for everyone onboard, but later picked up a few extra passengers at the raft up and was short a life jacket for the return trip. I'm not sure how Ms. Game Warden knew that I needed a safety inspection that day but she did, and I've got the ticket to prove it. My guests wanted to pay the fine but I refused the offer. I didn't fulfill my duties as captain, it's my ticket. My advice to all boaters is to assume that your guests know nothing of water safety and boating regulations. It's your job to change that. Not everyone had the experience of growing up on the water with a father who first taught "safety first," then help us have fun.

## F.Y.I. - PFD Requirements

- All vessels must have at least one Type I, II, III, or V personal flotation device that is U.S. Coast Guard–approved, wearable, and of the proper size for each person on board. Sizing for PFDs is based on body weight and chest size.

Type I, Type II, Type III-what is the difference?

Type I will save your life without your help. It has the most fixed buoyancy--at least 22 pounds--and more important, it floats you face up even if you are unconscious.

Type II is the least expensive, but you get what you pay for. This personal flotation device (PFD) has a third less fixed buoyancy than Type I, it doesn't necessarily float you face up without your help, and it is the least comfortable to wear.

Type III satisfies Coast Guard requirements, but is, at best, suitable only for near-shore emergencies. The big advantage of a Type III PFD is that it is comfortable enough to be worn all the time. Even the best life jacket won't help you if it is in the bottom of a locker. However, Type III PFDs have the same fixed buoyancy as Type IIs, making them suitable for water-skiing or dinghy sailing, for example, but less appropriate offshore.

Manually inflatable PFDs are also classified as Type III, but they perform like a Type I offshore vest, providing at least 22 pounds of buoyancy (usually more) when inflated and keeping the wearer's head above the water. Inflatable vests are by far the most comfortable to wear aboard, making them an excellent choice for nearly all circumstances.

Automatic inflatables--only recently approved by the Coast Guard--are inexplicably classified as Type V, meaning they must be worn to satisfy the regulations. Despite this oddity, their combination of comfortable wearability and high buoyancy give automatic inflatables the potential to provide the highest level of protection of any PFD. All automatic inflatables can also be inflated manually.

- All PFDs must be in good and serviceable condition and must be readily accessible.
- Texas law requires all children under 13 years of age to **wear** a U.S. Coast Guard–approved PFD while underway (not at anchor, moored, or aground) on a vessel less than 26 feet long.
- In addition to the above requirements, one Type IV (throwable) U.S. Coast Guard–approved PFD must be on board vessels 16 feet or longer and be readily accessible.
- One Type V may be substituted for any other type if it is specifically approved by the U.S. Coast Guard for the activity at hand. Type V PFDs may not be substituted on children weighing less than 90 lbs.
- Each person riding on or being towed behind a PWC must **wear** a U.S. Coast Guard <http://www.boat-ed.com/tx/>

*The lake's the place to be*

*Wayne Anderson*