

COVID-19 Virus: Cleaning & Storing your Life Jackets

The guidance posted below is still in compliance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recommendations. The Life Jacket Association Board of Directors have made no additional changes to the COVID-19 life jacket cleaning and storing protocols.

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Manufacturer's recommendations for cleaning your Personal Floatation Device (PFD):

CLEANING AND STORING YOUR PFD: To clean your inflatable PFD, hand wash or sponge down in warm, soapy water, taking care not to submerge the inflator. Rinse your PFD with clean water and hang to dry on a plastic coat hanger. Do not dry-clean, use chlorine bleach, or apply direct heat. Always store your fully dried PFD in a warm, dry, well ventilated place out of direct sunlight.

If you *must reuse* your product within 72 hours, the following precautionary guidance is suggested.

- COVID-19 virus may exist 3 days on or in clothing. Virus can exist longer on porous surfaces.
- Synthetic fabrics, plastic and metal surfaces may harbor the virus longer.
- Buckles, zippers, other hardware and hook/loop fasteners (e.g. Velcro®) are hard to clean due to crevasses and metal/plastic construction.
- Using 60 – 90% solutions of alcohol sprayed/wetted on these components is acceptable.
- Avoid spraying inflatables with specific disinfectants that are detrimental to the fabric. e.g. bleach-based products.
- Do not machine launder life jackets.
- Life jackets should be hand-washed with gloved hands – wash as hot as possible (< 60C/140F) to kill the virus. Hotter would be better in trying to kill the virus, but it is not advisable since the fabrics are only certifiable up to 60C.
- Ensuring complete drying is critical, heated air drying is encouraged < 60C

- Virus likes moisture and can survive in cold – virus dies by drying out and by heat, which some fibers can enhance.
- This pandemic is a new challenge and it is truly not known how all materials and the virus respond to laundry.
- If hang to air dry, allow 72 hours (3 days) before reuse.
- Do not share garments.

DISCLAIMER: *Remember it is not possible to carry out or guarantee complete disinfection, the goal is to minimize risk.*