

Small Entity Compliance Guide for the Lifejacket Approval Harmonization Final Rule

Basics—	<p>The Coast Guard is updating the approval requirements and follow-up program requirements for lifejackets by incorporating new standards to replace existing legacy standards. The Coast Guard is also updating lifejacket and personal flotation device (PFD) carriage requirements to allow for the use of equipment approved to the new standards and removes obsolete equipment approval requirements.</p> <p>The Coast Guard is making these changes to streamline the process for the approval of PFDs and allow manufacturers the opportunity to produce innovative equipment that complies with standards in both Canada and the United States.</p> <p>We published the final rule on December 6, 2024 and it is effective on January 6, 2025. This Small Entity Compliance Guide (SECG), issued under the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996, provides a plain language overview of the rule, but you should refer to the final rule directly for details.</p>
Who is affected by this rule?	You are affected by this rule if you are a manufacturer seeking Coast Guard approval of lifejackets or PFDs.
Where are the regulations found?	The regulations are found in Title 46 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Subparts 160.055, 160.064, 160.076, 160.255, 160.264, and 160.276 at eCFR :: 46 CFR Part 160 -- Lifesaving Equipment .
What are the primary changes in this rule?	<p>The Coast Guard is incorporating the following standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ANSI/CAN/UL 12402-5 for Level 50 and Level 70 PFDs,• ANSI/CAN/UL 12402-4 for Level 100 PFDs, and• ANSI/CAN/UL 9595 for quality assurance. <p>We are also removing portions of title 46 in part 160 of the CFR, where the new incorporated standards replace the previous standards or requirements. Additionally, we are changing lifesaving equipment carriage requirements to permit the use of Level 50, Level 70, and Level 100 PFDs approved to the new standards.</p>
What action must I take if I am covered by the rule?	Beginning on the effective date of the final rule, manufacturers seeking Coast Guard approval of new PFDs must meet the requirements in 46 CFR 160.255 for Level 100 lifejackets, and 46 CFR 160.264 or 160.276 for Level 50 or Level 70 PFDs. No new approvals will be issued under approval series 160.055, 160.064, or 160.076.

Are my current approvals affected?	Currently approved equipment with a valid Coast Guard approval under approval series 160.055, 160.064, and 160.076 may continue to be manufactured, marketed, and sold. Additionally, equipment may continue to be used to meet Coast Guard carriage requirements as long as it is in good and serviceable condition.
What alternatives are there to this rule for small businesses, if any?	There are no alternatives to this rule for small businesses.
How do I find this rule?	The official text of the “Lifejacket Approval Harmonization” final rule appears in the Federal Register for December 06, 2024, at 89 FR 97356. The Federal Register is available at www.FederalRegister.gov . For additional details on this rulemaking record, visit website: www.regulations.gov . The docket number for this rule is USCG-2022-0120.
If you have any questions about this rule, contact—	Office of Design and Engineering Standards United States Coast Guard Phone: 571-607-4931 E-mail: typeapproval@uscg.mil
For additional Coast Guard SECGs, visit—	Small Entity Compliance Guide (uscg.mil)