

# Life Jacket Loaner Guide



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## Introduction

Stay on Top of It, a drowning prevention campaign developed by Seattle Children's Hospital in Seattle, Washington has a particular focus on increasing life jacket use (also known as personal flotation devices or PFDs). In 1992, Children's piloted the first life jacket loaner program of its kind at two lifeguarded beaches in the Seattle area. Under the program, lifeguards helped parents select and borrow life jackets for their children while playing at the beach. In its first year, the loaner program pilot resulted in a high rate of usage of infant, child and youth sized life jackets and generated an enthusiastic response from parents, children and lifeguards.

### Success Story

At Black Lake, Thurston County, a paddleboat operated by two brother's age 9 and 11 and their 11 year old friend flipped over from the wake of a motorboat. Fully clothed, the boys had trouble swimming and were shocked by the cold water. They may have drowned except that each boy was wearing a life jacket from the life jacket loaner station. After being rescued, they told the firefighters, "I was really scared," "I couldn't breathe," and "I was drowning." The loaner program was in place all summer and parents commented that they felt safer taking their children near the water.

In 1993, the program was expanded to include nine more beaches. The program was also reoriented towards a "self-serve" model for loaning life jackets. An estimated 2,500 life jackets were loaned in 1993, and again parents gave a very positive response to the program. In 1994, the program was further expanded to include a total of 14 beaches and a public salt-water pool in King County and the cities of Bellevue, Redmond and Seattle. An observational survey was also conducted that indicated there was increased life jacket use at beaches with loaner programs.

From 1992 to 1995, Seattle Children's facilitated the planning, development, funding and evaluation of the program. City and county parks departments administered the program on a day to day basis utilizing lifeguards to monitor self-serve loan stations, answer questions, help fit life jackets as needed, and keep a file of release forms and sign-out sheets.

Primary funding was secured through mini grants from King County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Trauma Care Council. Mustang Survival, a life jacket manufacturer, provided discounted or free life jackets. Children's Hospital and the individual parks departments provided staff time, printing and other costs as needed.

In the summer of 1995, the life jacket loaner program was once again broadened in scope. With the creation of the Washington State Drowning Prevention Network, funded by a federal grant from the Emergency Medical Services for Children, a statewide network of drowning prevention professionals was activated to work in EMS Regions throughout Washington State. This allowed the adaptation and expansion of the life jacket loaner program to other settings, including marine patrols, swimming pools, boat ramps, marinas and boat rental programs statewide. At the same time other life jacket loaner programs were being developed in Alaska and through the Boat U.S. Foundation. Washington State Parks Boating Program and Safe Kids USA supported development of loaner programs. The Paris White Foundation has helped provide life jackets. Life jacket loaner programs continue to be developed by drowning prevention advocates and Safe Kids coalitions in Washington State and nationally.

## How to Use the Life Jacket Loaner Guide

This Guide is designed to help you start your own life jacket loaner program. The Life Jacket Loaner Guide walks you through set-up steps, highlights successful programs and program elements from Washington State, and refers you to resources you may need.

### Life Jacket Loaner Locations

Life jackets are useful not only while boating, but also while swimming or playing in swimming pools, lakes, rivers, the ocean, or in other bodies of water. A life jacket loaner program can be set up in a variety of settings to protect children, teens, and adults from the risk of drowning. These settings include:

- Beaches:
  - Life-guarded beaches in cooperation with parks department or private beach staff.
  - Beaches without life guards through a self-serve sign-out system, a concessionaire or nearby shop.
- Swimming Pools:
  - During family swim time.
  - During swimming lessons for children who are learning about water safety.
  - At private pools through a self-serve Checkout.
- Marinas/Boat Rentals/Boat Ramps in cooperation with boat, equipment, and water sports rental business operators.
- Marine Patrol to assist in enforcement of water safety regulations and gain positive compliance with life jacket requirements.

### Other Locations

Life jacket loaner programs have been developed at swim shops near beaches and at river or lake access points by U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary volunteers. They have been set up as roving programs, staffed by youth and moved from one site to another throughout the swimming or boating season. Fire and police stations also operate life jacket loaner programs from their stations or at sites near lakes and rivers.

#### Program Profile

**Life Jacket Loaner Programs** have operated in Washington State since 1992. In 2010, it's estimated that there are over 50 Life Jacket Loaner Programs in the state.

## Getting Started

Your plan for getting started should cover these steps: Develop Objectives, Secure Buy-In, Choose Site(s), Find Partners, Estimate a Budget, Identify Funding, and Plan to Evaluate.

### Step 1: Set Objectives

Start your planning by knowing what you want to accomplish and who you want your program to impact. Your objectives should:

- Relate to statistics that demonstrate the problem you want to address.
- State the groups and water settings you hope to address.
- State what you want to accomplish.

Clear objectives for your life jacket loaner program will also help convince funders and potential partner.

### Step 2: Secure Buy-In

- Gain commitment from and address potential barriers with key people in your organization.
- Consult with your legal counsel.
- Partner with a Safe Kids Coalition or other injury prevention group.

### Step 3: Choose Site(s)

When choosing where to set up your life jacket loaner program ask yourself:

- Where is the risk of drowning greatest and life jackets most needed?
- Where can my program partners most easily contribute time and staff?
- Where can life jackets be most easily loaned and returned?
- Is there a site manager who is interested and willing to oversee the program?

#### Program Profiles

**Mary Bridge Children's Hospital and Health Center** first developed a loaner program to address adolescent drowning. They identified priority sites using data and information on the nature and location of teen drowning. Mary Bridge staffed their loaner program with adolescents and young adults using an open tent that could be moved from site to site. Mary Bridge's objectives were:

- Raise awareness of the need for life jackets among adolescents.
- Show positive role modeling by having adolescents run the program.
- Show that there are fashionable, comfortable life jackets available to counter negative perceptions among adolescents.

## Step 4: Find Partners

A variety of groups in your community from public agencies to private businesses may be interested in working with you.

Existing drowning or injury prevention networks and coalitions are a good place to start recruiting partners for your life jacket loaner program. Each organization in your network or coalition usually has a resource they can most easily provide – a small amount of staff time from an existing water safety program, a grant source for equipment from a public agency, or life jackets from a marine product manufacturer.

In Washington State, WA State Parks Boating Program, Seattle Children’s, Safe Kids Washington, and Paris White Foundation can all help you with information and resources to get a program started.

### Program Profile

The **Inland Northwest Drowning Prevention Coalition**, based in Spokane, WA developed loaner programs in 8 counties with the help of the Spokane Tribal Park Rangers, the National Park Service, and the Sheriff Marine Patrols. Marine patrol officers had expertise in water safety and life jacket use and were interested in providing education and access to life jackets along with necessary enforcement. In some counties, life jackets were loaned and a ticket was waived. In other counties, a ticket was given if there were inadequate life jackets on board a boat, but the fee was waived or reduced if the boat operator showed evidence of purchasing a life jacket.

## Step 5: Estimate a Budget

You’ll need to budget small amounts of money for equipment, promotion and staffing. Many of these items can be obtained through in-kind contributions from your partners or other community supporters: on-site board and signs, pens and clipboards for release forms (if required), life jackets, release forms and sign-out sheets (if required), promotional flyers, press releases, and a project coordinator.

### Sample Budget (one site)

3 laminated signs (one informational, two promotional)	\$ 150 - 500
15 life jackets (\$15 – 40/jacket, depending on style and quality)	\$ 150 - 600
1 large A-board and 2 small sandwich boards	\$ 50 - 1000
Clipboards	\$ 15
Pens	\$ 10
Release forms / Sign-out sheets	\$ 50
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 425 - 2525</b>
Promotion:	
100 press releases	\$ 10
500 promotional flyers	\$ 50
Mailing costs	\$ 100
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 160</b>
Evaluation:	\$ varies*
Staff:	
Project Coordinator	\$ varies*

\* Depends on number of sites, availability of staff, interns, etc.

**NOTE:** After the initial set up, maintenance costs are low. Your program will need to make an ongoing commitment for staff/administrative support. You will need to revise and reprint release forms and sign-out sheets. You can expect some loss or damage of life jackets, so plan to replace 25- 35% each year. If anything, the interest will be in increasing the number of jackets available.

## Step 6: Identify Funding Sources

With clear objectives and a network of partners, you can solicit funding for a life jacket loaner program from organizations that will benefit from your program. Consider approaching the following sources:

- Washington State Parks Boating Program for boating related programs (see Resources)
- Paris White Foundation (see Resources))
- Safe Kids Coalitions
- Boat/US Foundation Life Jacket Loaner Program (see “Resources”)
- Small grant programs from regional or state Emergency Medical Services agencies
- Local hospitals
- City or County parks and aquatics programs
- Marine product and life jacket manufacturers and retailers
- Hardware stores or sporting goods stores
- Members of your drowning prevention network or coalition
- Service organizations like the Lions, Rotary Club, or Kiwanis Club

## Step 7: Plan to Evaluate

From the start, plan to include an evaluation of how well the program is working and meets its goals. See Appendix A for an example of a survey evaluation. Evaluation methods could include:

- Feedback from people coordinating the program.
- Feedback and suggestions from people using the life jacket loaner program.
- Documented use of PFDs through sign up sheets, observation, or other method.
- Documented saves as a result of the loaner program.

### Program Profile

**Seattle Children's Hospital** has a clear focus for its life jacket loaner program. The program elements were based on Washington State's drowning data and a survey of life jacket use around the State. Seattle Children's goal has been to increase the number of children, teens, and adults who use life jackets at beaches, on docks, at swimming pools, and in boats. Seattle Children's life jacket loaner program established three primary objectives:

- Raise awareness about comfortable life jackets.
- Increase access to life jackets.
- Increase use of life jackets at beaches, pools, and around open water.

# Getting Set Up

## Step 1: Establish a Program Timeline

The start of a new program can require extra lead-time for coordinating with partners, finding funding, developing a program structure and materials, and training. Create a realistic program timeline for your project that includes the major tasks you will need to accomplish, and review and revise it as the life jacket loaner program progresses. Share the timeline with your partners, so everyone is aware of expected deadlines.

### SAMPLE TIMELINE

Before the Launch	After the Launch
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop goals and evaluation plan.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Obtain necessary approvals.</li></ul>	<b>1 Week After</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Check in with loaner program coordinator.</li></ul>
<b>3-6 Months Before</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify funding sources.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Recruit partners and develop action plan.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Draft proposed loan system.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Submit proposed loan system for legal review.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Submit funding request.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Decide site for loaner program.</li></ul>	<b>2 Weeks After</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Begin collecting sign-out sheets and other release forms.</li></ul>
<b>2-3 Months Before</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Secure funding.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm legal approval.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop release form and sign-out sheets.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Download loan board sign from Seattle Children's website.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Find a contractor or volunteers to build loan boards.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Order life jackets.</li></ul>	<b>4 Weeks After</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Visit site and observe families for life jacket use.</li></ul>
<b>1 Month Before</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Finalize and print release forms and sign-out sheets.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Finalize signage, print, and laminate signs.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Order all other supplies.</li></ul>	<b>Last Week of Season</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Send surveys to people involved (if applicable).</li></ul>
<b>2 Weeks Before</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Distribute loaner program materials to each site.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare to implement evaluation.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Write and distribute initial press release.</li></ul>	<b>After Season Ends</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Tabulate surveys and observation data (if applicable).</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Meet with loaner program coordinator.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Modify program accordingly.</li></ul>
<b>4 Days Before</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Train people working on the program.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Redistribute press.</li></ul>	

## Step 2: Secure Life Jackets

Choosing the right type and style of life jackets will help your program be a success. The life jackets you use will need to appeal to both adults and children and provide adequate protection in the water. While you may start your program with an emphasis on life jackets for children, we encourage you to provide teen and adult sizes to promote life jacket use as a norm for all ages.

### Success Story

At a lake in Spokane, the Sherriff's Marine Patrol Division set up a life jacket loaner program for boaters. A family was getting ready for a day of boating and borrowed a life jacket for their 2 year old. Shortly after putting on the jacket, the toddler fell off the dock and into the cold, murky water. She bobbed up to the surface and was quickly lifted from the water by her mom.

**How many life jackets do I need?** A life jacket loaner program at a beach can operate, at least at first, with about 12 life jackets. For example, start with 3 infant, 6 child and 3 youth size jackets or with 2 infant, 3 child, 2 youth, 1 XS adult, 1 Sm adult, 1 Med adult, 1 Lg adult, and 1 XL adult life jackets. For a marine patrol life jacket loaner program you could start with 6-8 jackets.

**Which life jackets should I choose?** Use these guidelines to choose life jackets:

- US Coast Guard approved.
- A variety of sizes including at least infant, child, and youth.
- Jackets with neck collar for head support, loop and crotch straps for infants and children.
- The correct type for the water activity – Type II or Type III will be most comfortable.
- Vest-type life jackets are more comfortable and stylish, but “horseshoe” type jackets work too.
- An attractive color and design to appeal to fashion-conscious children.
- Bright colors so they are easy to see.

**Where can I find low-cost life jackets?**

- Contact the Paris White Foundation.
- Contact WA State Parks Boating Program.
- Talk with local boating and marine products retailers and manufacturers about supporting your program with a discounted price or free life jackets.
- Apply to a program like the Boat US Foundation Life Jacket Loaner program or join the National Safe Boating Council (see “Resources” for contact information).

**How can I minimize loss of life jackets?** Most life jacket loaner programs experience some loss or theft of life jackets. Loss and theft of jackets can be reduced by:

- Marking the back of jackets with the program/organization sponsor name.
- Keeping life jacket display within sight of lifeguard or site sponsor station.

### **Step 3: Create a Life Jacket Loan Sign Board**

**How do I design my board structure?** Choose a Life Jacket Loan sign board type to match your needs: it could be a movable sandwich board, a permanent signpost, or a locking cabinet that doubles as life jacket storage. Find a local contractor or volunteer who can build your board structure and a signage fabricator to print your signboard. Eagle Scouts have built many of the boards in Washington State. Appendix D contains photos of example signboards. The *Alaska Kids Don't Float Program* and the Army Corps of Engineers Loan Board Guides contains sample plans for building a sign board or life jacket storage cabinet:

[http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/injury\\_prevention/kids\\_dont\\_float.htm](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/injury_prevention/kids_dont_float.htm) or [www.seattlechildrens.org/dp/](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/dp/).

**Where can I download a Life Jacket Loan sign?** Safe Kids Washington and Washington State Drowning Prevention Network members have worked together to develop a standard Life Jacket Loaner Sign for use in Washington state. You can download the ready-to-print sign from [www.seattlechildrens.org/dp/](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/dp/). The signs are currently available in 2 formats and file types:

- Horizontal (landscape) 36 inches wide x 27 inches high
- Vertical (portrait) 27 inches wide x 36 inches high
- Downloadable as native InDesign files or as high-resolution pdf files

If a specific usage requires a change in size or proportions, please contact the designer Studio Bolo to discuss the project and costs associated with making the changes necessary (see page 14 for Studio Bolo contact information).

**What if I need to design my own sign?** If you need to design your own sign because of your funder's requirements, consider the following elements to help create consistency among Washington Life Jacket Loaner sign boards:

- Use the same text as the Washington State sign board:
  - 1) Borrow a life jacket.
  - 2) Check the label- Choose the right size.
  - 3) Fasten all buckles, zippers, and straps.
  - 4) Make sure it fits. It should be snug, but not tight.
  - 5) Wear it here. Leave it here.
- Use visuals for each step – pictures are ideal.
- Include bilingual text.

### **How can I create my board structure and sign at low cost?**

- Ask your local Eagle Scouts, Kiwanis Club, or a local contractor to donate design and building time.
- Ask a local lumber yard or hardware store to donate materials.
- Ask a local printer to donate the printing of your sign.

### **Step 4: Set Up Staffing and Staff Training**

Your life jacket loaner program will need staffing for initial setup, coordination, and on-site life jacket monitoring. An overall program coordinator and advocate for the program will help ensure success. Whether it is coordinated by lifeguards, marina operators, marine patrol, fire fighters, park staff, concession stands or others, consider the following as part of training:

- Life jacket loaner program objectives.
- How to set up a site.
- Proper life jacket fit.
- Inspection and maintenance of life jackets.
- How to answer life jacket user questions .
- How to document use, maintain loan sign-out sheets, release forms, and records.
- Liability issues.

Appendix C: *Sheriff's Indemnification Agreement* gives a sample form that outlines these responsibilities.

In all water settings, key staff should be kept motivated and informed by including their feedback in program evaluation. They should regularly receive results of program surveys and reviews.

#### **Program Profile**

Organizational partnerships were important to the development of [Seattle and King County Life Jacket Loaner Programs](#). When Seattle Children's began working on the life jacket loaner program, it was an active member of the King County Drowning Prevention Coalition. Participation in the coalition provided an opportunity to create long-term relationships with park officials who managed the lifeguarded public beaches and pools in Seattle and King County. When developing Life Jacket Loaner Programs, Seattle Children's was able to apply for funding as a non-profit agency. City and county parks provided the beach and pool sites and staff trained in and committed to water safety. Seattle Children's and the parks departments covered administrative costs and on-site staff time. Grants from the King County EMS and Trauma Care Council and donations from Mustang Survival covered initial expenses. These programs have been maintained at all of their lifeguarded beaches, updated signs, and translated text into multiple languages.

## Step 5: Create a Check-Out Procedure

Some jurisdictions will require that your life jacket loaner program have a simple, easy to follow check-out procedure. Clear written instructions and signs for parents and guardians can reduce the demands on staff to explain the procedure or fit life jackets. Here are suggestions for a check-out procedure for parents/guardians:

- Simple instructions.
- Release form (one time per swimming season with check-off of form for repeat uses/season).
- Sign-out sheet with date, age of child, size of life jacket, and check-off for signing release form.
- Life jacket sizes.
  - **Infant** Up to 30 pounds
  - **Child** 30 to 50 pounds
  - **Youth** 50 to 90 pounds
  - **Adult** Over 90 pounds
- Instructions on how to adjust a life jacket to fit the wearer properly. Reference to staff person to help with any choosing or fitting problems.
- How to return life jacket when finished.
- Translate information into other languages as needed

## Step 6: Create a Release Form

Consult with your legal counsel to determine whether you need a release form. Reinforce that loaner programs are successfully operating across the country. Some programs have found it necessary to have a brief release form for parents to sign informing them that:

- Being in or near the water poses a risk of drowning.
- A life jacket provides some protection, but is not a replacement for supervision.
- Selecting the right size life jacket and putting the life jacket on properly is important.

The simplest way to cover release from liability for parents using the program several times is to use a form worded to apply for an entire swimming season. Your life jacket loaner program procedures also need to address other areas of liability including instructions for parents and children, inspection of life jackets, and releases for non-parent participants. These additional points are summarized in Appendix B *Life Jacket Loan Release Form Guidelines*.

### Sample Release Forms

Appendix C gives you a sample release form for a pool or beach setting (*Release From Liability / Indemnity Agreement for Use of Life Jacket*) and a sample combined sign-out and release form (*Life Jacket Loaner program Sign-Out*).

# Promoting Life Jacket Loaner Programs

## Create On-Site Promotion Signs

One of the best ways to let parents know about the program is through on-site promotion signs. Signs should be displayed at the entrance to water areas and at life jacket checkout points. On-site promotion signs provide a chance to recognize program sponsors, as well as announce the program. When designing promotion signs, keep in mind that unless they are permanently installed for the season, they need to be lightweight so that moving them daily is easy.

### Program Profile

**Kitsap Safe Swimmers** developed life jacket loaner programs in response to the tragic death of a teen swimmer at a local lake.

## Send Press Releases

Send press releases out to local newspapers, radio, and television stations about a week before the program starts. Your press release should include:

- Brief program overview.
- List of life jacket loan sites.
- Reference to other local water safety efforts or recent drowning incidents.
- Local contact for further information.

## Contact Television Stations

Send press releases to news directors at local television stations with an invitation to film your opening event or start of the swimming season. You can also offer to provide a local drowning prevention professional or parent supporter for background interview.

## Other Community Publicity

Distribute flyers and invitations to use your life jacket loaner program through other community programs including:

- Health fairs
- Water safety and injury prevention hotlines
- School information packets
- Homeowners associations near your life jacket loaner program sites

## Resources

**Life Jacket Loaner Guide:** [http://www.seattlechildrens.org/pdf/life\\_jacket\\_loaner\\_guide.pdf](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/pdf/life_jacket_loaner_guide.pdf)

**BoatU.S. Foundation:** <http://www.boatus.com/foundation/ljlp/index.htm>

Boat US Foundation offers life jacket loaner program information for water safety organizations and marine patrol

**Paris White Foundation:** <http://pariswhite.com/>

Paris White Foundation donates life jackets to help start life jacket loaner programs in WA State.

**Safe Boating Campaign:** <http://www.safeboatingcampaign.com/>

Information on choosing life jackets from the US Coast Guard Safe Boating Campaign.

**Safe Kids:** <http://www.safekids.org>

Information on national child safety program

**National Safe Boating Council:** <http://www.safeboatingcouncil.org>

Information on joining the National Safe Boating Council. Member benefit periodically includes availability of low cost life jackets.

**Alaska Kids Don't Float Program:** [http://www.chems.alaska.gov/kids\\_don't\\_float.htm](http://www.chems.alaska.gov/kids_don't_float.htm)

## Contacts

For more information on starting a life jacket loaner program:

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**Lisa Gast**  
Washington State Parks  
360 902-8846  
[Lisa.Gast@parks.wa.gov](mailto:Lisa.Gast@parks.wa.gov)

For customizing the Washington State Life Jacket Loan Board graphics:

**James Forkner**  
Studio Bolo  
206-933-1157  
206-419-7121 cell  
<http://www.studiobolo.com>

**Appendix A**  
**Life Jacket Loaner Program**  
**Survey of People Coordinating**  
**Program**

## Life Jacket Loaner Program Sample Survey

Seattle Children's Hospital

**Question 1: What is your perception of how people liked the life jacket loaner program?**

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
	Didn't like at all				Liked a lot

**Question 2: What is your perception of how people like using the life jackets?**

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
	Didn't like at all				Liked a lot

**Question 3: Do you think people were using the life jackets mostly while...**

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
	Swimming only		Both		Playing near the water

**Question 4: One goal of the program is to educate families about the important role of life jackets at beaches and pools. To what degree does the program meet that goal?**

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
	Parents didn't learn that life jackets are important				Parents learned that life jackets are important

**Question 5: How often were the life jackets used?**

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
	Hardly ever				Many loaned daily

**Question 6: Compared to last year, did you see families bring their own life jackets to the beach/pool...**

Scale	More than last year	Less than last year	No change	Not applicable
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**Question 7: How often were the signs and life jackets stationed on the beach/near the pool?**

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
	Rarely				Every day

**Question 8: How often did people complete the sign-out sheet before borrowing a life jacket?**

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
	Never	First time borrowers only		Every time	Don't know

**Question 9: How often did people complete the release form?**

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
	Never		First time borrowers only	Every time	Don't know

**Question 10: If this program were available to you next year, would you recommend...**

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
	Discontinue		Keep it as is		Expand program

**Question 11: Did you play an active role in educating people about the use of life jackets?**

Scale	Yes	No
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**Question 12: Compared to last year, without the program, did you educate people about life jackets...**

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
	Less than last year		Same		More this year

**Question 13: Were you given enough information/instructions about the program to keep it running smoothly?**

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
	Not enough		Just right		Too much

**Question 14: How did the program run?**

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
	Lots of effort to keep up				Program ran itself

**Question 15: What suggestions do you have to make the program better?**

**Question 16: Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about the program?**

# **Appendix B**

## **Sample Life Jacket Loan Forms**

## **Life Jacket Loan Release Form Guidelines**

**In drafting life jacket release and indemnity agreements for a life jacket loaner program, consider the following points to help reduce exposure to liability. Consult with your own legal counsel to define and minimize risks.**

1. Have the jackets inspected regularly to be sure they are in good repair and work properly.
2. Attach proper instructions to the jacket itself, if possible.
3. Develop a set of “canned” directions and instructions, that staff give in ALL cases, and be sure that staff are well trained and conscientious about giving out the required information.
4. Do not deliver the jackets to inappropriate users (anyone who is drug or alcohol impaired).
5. Discuss with your legal counsel how to work with families whose command of English is such that they cannot understand the warnings, instructions, and release form.
6. Do not hand out the jacket until the parent (or other responsible adult) has read the warnings/instructions (or had them read to him or her) and agreed to take responsibility for the use of the jacket.
7. Have the staff person keep a log confirming that the necessary directions and warnings were given, by name of the borrower, so that there is proof of this.
8. Clear the program with your liability insurer, if you have not done so already.
9. Consider including additional language for releases that are signed by nannies, grandparents, family friends, etc., who take kids to the beach. However, this type of release form does not ordinarily bind the parent, unless they authorized the release.
10. Verify whether your state has a law in which a parental release form binds a child to release the child’s own claim for negligent injury.

**In drafting your form, you may want to consider the following risks:**

1. A child feels invulnerable, goes too far out, and is hit by a boat or waterskier.
2. The jacket is not put on properly (or is too large), and the child slips out.
3. The jacket is too small for a large child, and provides inadequate flotation.
4. A child is strangled by a jacket.
5. The parents (and/or the child) can’t read the release form or the sign because of literacy, inability to speak/understand English, or because the signs are obscured.
6. The staff person and/or the organization coordinating the program is sued and makes a claim against your organization for indemnity.

## SAMPLE RELEASE FORM

### RELEASE FROM LIABILITY AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT FOR USE OF LIFE JACKET

PLEASE READ THIS AGREEMENT CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU USE  
A LIFE JACKET PROVIDED BY THE \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** You only need to complete this form once during the swimming season, with respect to each child using a life jacket.

I understand that being in and near the water poses a risk of drowning for my child or children. I understand that the life jacket provides some protection from drowning, but is not a replacement for supervision. I also understand that selecting the right size life jacket and putting the life jacket on properly is important.

In consideration of my choice to borrow a life jacket, or jackets, from the

\_\_\_\_\_ during the swimming season, I hereby waive and release \_\_\_\_\_, its agents and employees, and city of \_\_\_\_\_ from all liability or claims arising from child's or children's use of life jackets provided by \_\_\_\_\_ during the swimming season, even if caused by solely the negligence of \_\_\_\_\_.

I also agree to indemnify and hold harmless \_\_\_\_\_, its agents and employees, and city of \_\_\_\_\_ from all liability or claims out of the use of \_\_\_\_\_ life jacket during the swimming season, including but not limited to any liability or claims for personal injury made by or on behalf of any child or children of mine.

If I am not the parent or legal guardian of the child using the life jacket(s), I represent that I have the express authority to Release and Indemnity agreement on behalf of the child's or children's parents or legal guardian and to bind each to its terms. By my signature below, I agree to bind both the child's or children's parents or legal guardian and myself to the terms of this Release and Indemnity Agreement.

I have read and understand this Release and Indemnity Agreement:

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Children's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian/Other representative signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# LIFE JACKET LOANER PROGRAM SIGN-OUT

Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please read this agreement carefully before you use a life jacket provided by this agency through the \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that being in and near the water poses a risk of drowning for my child or children. I understand that a life jacket provides some protection from drowning, but is not a replacement for supervision. I also understand that selecting the right size life jacket and putting the jacket on properly is important. In consideration of my choice to borrow a life jacket, or jackets, from this Life Jacket Loaner program, I hereby waive and release this agency \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ from all liability or claims arising from my child's or children's use of life jackets provided.

Child Name	Age	Jacket #	Date	Time Out	Time Returned	Parent Signature	Address (include City, State & Zip)

Please save these forms and return to \_\_\_\_\_ at the end of this swimming season.

**SAMPLE  
INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT**

The Sheriff of the undersigned County, or his designated agent, hereby accepts all responsibility for implementation of the Life Jacket Loaner program and agrees to hold harmless all members of the \_\_\_\_\_ Coalition and the \_\_\_\_\_, their successors, heirs, and assigns from all liability or claims or causes of action arising directly or indirectly out of the use of life jackets provided by said agencies to the undersigned, including but not limited to any liability or claim for personal injury made by or on behalf of any person participating in the Life Jacket Loaner program.

The undersigned further agrees to accept all responsibility to verify that the life jackets loaned properly fit the person who will wear the loaned life jacket, based upon information provided by \_\_\_\_\_ and by visual inspection. Such verification shall be completed prior to loaning the life jacket.

The undersigned also agrees to regularly make a routine inspection of each life jacket used in the program to insure that the life jackets are in good and serviceable condition. Said inspections shall occur at least weekly and shall be documented in the log provided for this purpose.

The undersigned also agrees to provide the \_\_\_\_\_ with statistical information including the date, size and location of each life jacket loaned as part of the program not less frequently than yearly, for as long as the Life Jacket Loaner program is undertaken by the undersigned authority.

Further, the undersigned agrees to distribute to all persons who borrow a life jacket from the Life Jacket Loaner program, drowning prevention information and any applicable instruction material relating to the use of the life jackets. This information will be provided by the \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sheriff/Authorized Agent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
County



# **Appendix C**

## **Life Jacket Loan Board**

### **Examples**

**Washington State Standard Life Jacket Loaner Program Sign:  
Horizontal Format**

# **Borrow a Life Jacket** **Toma prestado un chaleco salvavidas**

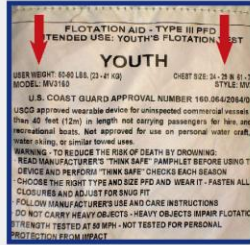


**1**

**Borrow a life jacket.**

**Toma prestado un chaleco salvavidas.**

Supported By:



**2**

**Check the label –  
Choose the right size.**

**Comprueba la etiqueta –  
Elige el tamaño correcto.**



**3**

**Fasten all buckles,  
zippers and straps.**

**Abrocha todas las  
hebillas, cierres y  
correas.**



**4**

**Make sure it fits.  
It should be snug,  
but not tight.**

**Asegúrate que te  
quede bien. Debe  
quedarte ajustado  
pero no apretado.**



**5**

**Wear it here.**

**Úsalo aquí.**

**Leave it here.**

**Déjalo aquí.**

**In Partnership With:**

Washington State Drowning  
Prevention Network



**Life Jackets Save Lives**

**Los chalecos salvavidas salvan vidas**

**Washington State Standard Life Jacket Loaner Program Sign:  
Vertical Format**

# Borrow a Life Jacket

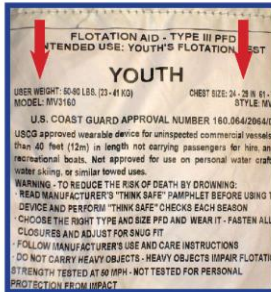
## Toma prestado un chaleco salvavidas



**1**

**Borrow a life jacket.**

**Toma prestado un chaleco salvavidas.**



**2**

**Check the label –  
Choose the right size.**

**Comprueba la etiqueta –  
Elige el tamaño correcto.**



**3**

**Fasten all buckles,  
zippers and straps.**

**Abrocha todas las  
hebillas, cierres y correas.**



**4**

**Make sure it fits. It should  
be snug, but not tight.**

**Asegúrate que te quede  
bien. Debe quedarte  
ajustado pero no apretado.**



**5**

**Wear it here.**

**Úsalo aquí.**

**Leave it here.**

**Déjalo aquí.**

Supported By:

**In Partnership With:**

Washington State Drowning  
Prevention Network



**Life Jackets Save Lives  
Los chalecos salvavidas salvan vidas**

# Life Jacket Loan Sign Board examples

