



# PFD professional maintenance guide

As part of your PPE, personal floatation devices (PFDs) or buoyancy aids should be checked frequently for damage, wear and tear, and floatation. It is important to keep records of purchase, use and testing, as you may be obliged to do this under regulation (by HSE and ALAA in the UK or EC directives on PPE) or by your insurers. These records should also form a part of your ongoing risk assessment.

You're responsible for keeping your equipment in good order, but we can help. Here's our guide to maintaining and testing your Palm PFDs. Get in touch if you'd like us to test your PFDs for you at our factory facility.

## Looking after a PFD

All PFD foams degrade with time, and webbing, buckles and shell fabric will all be subject to wear and tear. How long your PFDs last will be affected by how often they are used, the environment in which they are used, and how well they are maintained.

**Light use** (a few times a month)

**Medium use** (every week)

**Heavy use** (daily)

### Washing



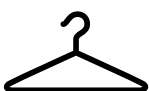
Rinse PFDs in clean, fresh water after each use to help reduce corrosion or degradation of materials. A mild detergent (Granger's Performance Wash or equivalent) or disinfectant (Milton or equivalent) can be used to clean your gear.

### Drying



Drip dry PFDs out of sunlight. Frequent forced drying in drying rooms will shorten the lifespan of the material and foam.

### Storage



Hang PFDs on hangers from the shoulder straps. Avoid storing them wet or damp. Avoid stacking or boxing your PFDs for long periods – sustained compression will damage the foam.

# Checking and logging PFD condition

Number your PFDs and make a log of date of purchase, date of first use, test dates and condition. We recommend the web app Papertrail.io.

A visual check as you pick the PFD from the rail and fit it should be part of every session. Make time also to inspect and record the condition of your PFDs in stores on a regular basis and periodically float test them. We recommend that you should carry out the checks listed below. If a product does not pass any of these it should be repaired or retired.

**Table – recommended PFD checks**

		CHECK DATE	SIGNED	NOTES
<b>EVERY USE</b>	<b>zips</b>	Fastening zips are free from corrosion, free to slide and can be fully opened.		
	<b>buckles</b>	Buckles have no broken parts, lock closed and open as intended.		
	<b>straps</b>	Straps are free to slide and webbing is free from tears, snags or unraveling.		
	<b>tearing/stitching</b>	Check for tears in the fabric or broken stitching, especially around strapping and closures.		
ALL OF THE ABOVE PLUS				
<b>OCCASIONALLY</b>	<b>pockets</b>	Pockets and other storage are free from debris and mould. Ensure they open/close.		
	<b>abrasion/wear</b>	Check for excessive abrasion that might result in the shell structure of the garment failing.		
	<b>fading</b>	Check for significant fading, as this may indicate a deterioration of the strength of the materials.		
ALL OF THE ABOVE PLUS				
<b>YEARLY</b>	<b>foam</b>	Check the foam fit. If loose, this indicates deterioration of the foam and loss of floatation.		
	<b>floatation</b>	Perform a float test to determine that the device still provides enough buoyancy to meet the standard.		

For light or medium users, we recommend that you should float test your PFDs every year from 3 years after date of purchase. For heavy users we recommend beginning annual float testing after 2 years.

# Float testing

Palm PFDs are made to ISO 12402-5 (50 Newton standard) and 12402-6 (special purposes standard). This standard covers a range of weights with 50 N buoyancy for an adult of 70 kg or more. For small people and kid's PFDs the following scale applies:

**Table – ISO 50 N standard**

Wearer's weight (kg)	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	>70
Minimum buoyancy (N)	35	40	40	45	50

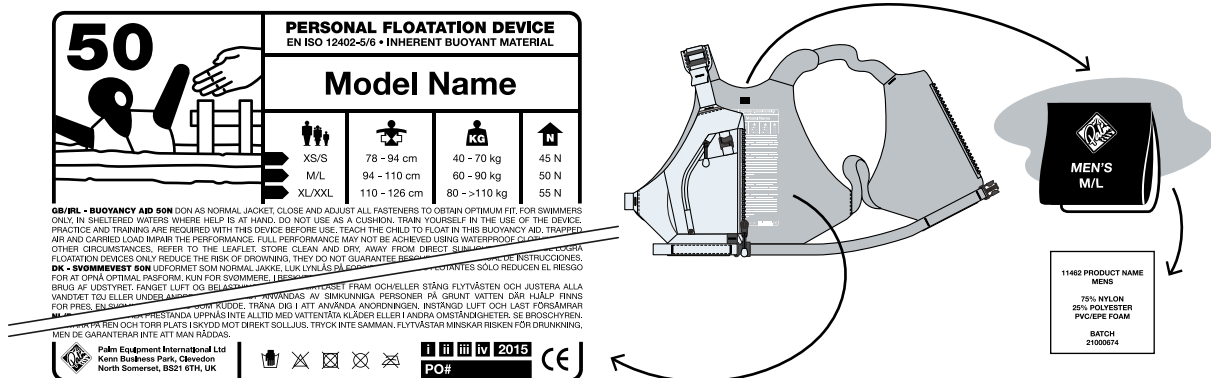
We mark the effective buoyancy of our PFDs on the label. Our larger buoyancy aids, or those intended for special purpose will float in excess of the 50 N standard. Many Palm PFDs exceed the 50 N standard.

## PFD labelling

Palm PFDs are labelled with their size, batch number and rated floatation (old products may be labelled differently). The size is marked on the fabric label inside the back of the PFD and the label beneath shows the product's name and code, principle component materials and the batch number.

Printed in the back of your PFD is the ISO label, showing the ISO standard to which it is rated, the rated floatation for that size and model of PFD and an advisory guide to fit for paddler size and weight.

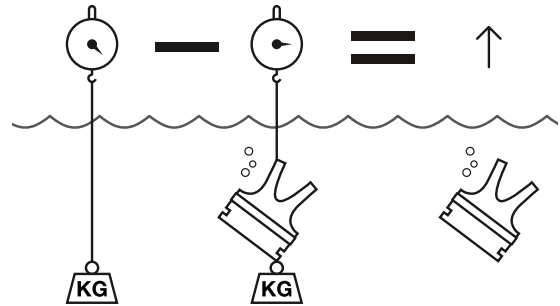
Attached to each new PFD is an advisory booklet, which also has marked on the back cover the average rated buoyancy for the PFDs in this batch from the Palm factory, marked in pen on the information chart.



## Simple float test

If you want to do a rough test of your own PFDs you will need: a hanging scale (electronic luggage scales are good), a short length of rope, a 10 kg weight (12 kg if you're testing a model with more than 100 N floatation like the Highside Rafter), and enough fresh water to dunk your PFD and weight entirely underwater (a swimming pool or large barrel are ideal).

- 1 Attach your weight to the scale with the rope and dunk it underwater. Take a reading from the scale.
- 2 Attach the weight to your PFD and then to the scale with the rope. Dunk it underwater and wait for any trapped air bubbles to escape. Take a reading from the scale.
- 3 Subtract measurement 2 from measurement 1 to get your PFD's floatation in kg force. Multiply this by 9.8 to convert kg to Newtons and you have the PFD's buoyancy in Newtons.



For an accurate appraisal we offer a factory float test service. We will test your PFDs, inspect their condition and issue you a pass certificate and/or our recommendation. Please get in touch with Palm Customer Services for price and details.

## What if you find damage?

If you find a fault with a PFD, remove it from use and decide whether to retire or repair it. Call our customer service team for advice or to arrange a repair at a reasonable cost. For all warranty claims (1 year from date of purchase) return your PFD to us for assessment as soon as possible. We advise that you do not perform repairs yourself.

If you require any further information please contact:

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### Palm Customer Service

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