Personal Flotation Devices Stats and Facts

FACTS

The Risks of PFDs:

1. Wearing a PFD can create a false sense of security, leading individuals to take unnecessary risks or neglect other safety precautions.
2. If a PFD is not properly fitted or used incorrectly, it may not provide adequate buoyancy or support. It is crucial to follow manufacturer instructions, adjust straps properly, and ensure a snug and secure fit.
3. Type III PFDs, which are popular for recreational activities, may not be suitable for rough or open waters where a Type I PFD would be more appropriate. It is important to choose the right type of PFD for the specific activity and water conditions.
4. Inadequate fastening, failure to secure all buckles and straps, or incorrect adjustment can diminish their ability to keep a person afloat.
5. PFDs require regular inspection and maintenance to ensure they are in good working condition. Over time, wear and tear, exposure to UV rays, and improper storage can weaken the materials or components of a PFD.
6. PFDs may fail in certain circumstances, and it is important to have the ability to swim and self-rescue. Combining the use of PFDs with proper water safety education and skills is essential for comprehensive water safety.
7. Non-swimmers and individuals with limited water skills should receive close supervision even when wearing PFDs. In cases of unconsciousness, PFDs may not be able to maintain a face-up position in the water.

STATS

The Center for Disease Control’s boating safety website reports:

- In 2018, there were 2,511 injuries and 633 fatalities from boating accidents.
- Of the people who died, 77% drowned.
- Of those who drowned, 84% were not wearing personal floatation devices.
- Alcohol use was the leading contributing factor in fatal boating incidents.

The United States Coast Guard (USCG) conducted study on boating fatalities and the effectiveness of wearing life preservers and reports:

- 9 out of 10 drownings occur in inland waters, not on the ocean like most people think.
- Most boat-related drownings involve boats less than 20 ft. long or less.
- Almost every drowning victim had a life jacket available and chose not to wear it.