



# Do I really need to wear a life jacket?



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“Do I really need to wear a life jacket? I’ve been boating since dinosaurs roamed the earth and it has always been fine!” How many of us have said something like that? More than a few and more than would admit to it. It is a natural reaction to wearing something that might be considered “binding,” versus the wonderful feeling of just being out on the water. But think again. Some activities require a life jacket (more scientifically called a “Personal Flotation Device” or PFD). Water-skiing regulations require the skier to wear one. The driver and passengers of a “Personal Water Craft,” often called a jet ski, are required to wear them. If you are younger than 13 years old, you must wear one. If you are using the “Type-5” PFD, the kind that looks like a set of suspenders with buoyancy pouches that are inflated by a CO2 cartridge, you must be wearing it for the USCG to consider that it is on the boat (unless you are under 16, in which case it is illegal to wear that type due to the risk of accidental inflation, among other concerns.)

But what about the fellow who just wants to tool away from the dock, quietly find his favorite fishing spot off the channel in Moriches Bay and just drop two hooks – one for the boat and one for the fish? How dangerous is that? It can be plenty dangerous. Aside from weather changes, the rapid change from dusk to night and things like that, there are other boaters. And

I don’t mean the ones that drive into you, admittedly a rare albeit not unique occurrence. Here’s the scenario: You hook that fish that has been nibbling your bait away all afternoon. You finally have him on the hook. As you reach over with the landing net to get him in the boat, another boater races by and his wake hits your boat at just the wrong angle at just the

wrong time. Into the drink you go. **Here are the statistics:** 16 guys wearing life jackets go into the water and 15 come out. 16 guys without life jackets go in the water -- one comes out. Do you have a boater that you love? Get him or her to wear a life jacket, especially if they are out there alone.

**January 2007 - Moriches Inlet**  
 The Time Offsets mentioned in the column are as follows:

Tidal Time Offsets from Moriches Inlet:	USCG Station	Potunk Point	Mastic Beach	Smith Pt Bridge
High Tide	+45 min	+4.5 hrs	+4.5 hrs	+3 hrs
Low Tide	+2 hrs	+5 hrs	+5 hrs	+4 hrs

  

Day	High		Low		High		Low		High	
	Time	Offset								
Wed 03	06:16 AM	3.38	12:44 PM	-0.32	06:47 PM	2.75				
Thu 04			12:38 AM	-0.17	07:02 AM	3.32	01:30 PM	-0.31	07:34 PM	2.73
Fri 05			01:25 AM	-0.12	07:46 AM	3.22	02:12 PM	-0.26	08:21 PM	2.68
Sat 06			02:08 AM	-0.04	08:30 AM	3.08	02:51 PM	-0.17	09:08 PM	2.63
Sun 07			02:50 AM	0.08	09:14 AM	2.92	03:29 PM	-0.06	09:55 PM	2.57
Mon 08			03:30 AM	0.22	09:58 AM	2.74	04:05 PM	0.07	10:41 PM	2.54
Tue 09			04:14 AM	0.36	10:42 AM	2.57	04:43 PM	0.20	11:25 PM	2.52
Wed 10			05:04 AM	0.49	11:26 AM	2.40	05:25 PM	0.31		
Thu 11	12:08 AM	2.52	06:04 AM	0.57	12:11 PM	2.25	06:15 PM	0.40		
Fri 12	12:52 AM	2.54	07:10 AM	0.57	12:59 PM	2.14	07:11 PM	0.43		
Sat 13	01:40 AM	2.59	08:11 AM	0.49	01:55 PM	2.08	08:07 PM	0.40		
Sun 14	02:32 AM	2.66	09:05 AM	0.36	02:55 PM	2.09	08:59 PM	0.32		
Mon 15	03:27 AM	2.78	09:56 AM	0.21	03:54 PM	2.18	09:49 PM	0.21		
Tue 16	04:19 AM	2.95	10:44 AM	0.05	04:47 PM	2.33	10:39 PM	0.08		
Wed 17	05:08 AM	3.13	11:32 AM	-0.11	05:34 PM	2.49	11:29 PM	-0.07		