

# Inflatable PFD Survey Summary Report - 29 April 2015

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This document available at [www.kp44.org/ftp/PFD\\_Survey.pdf](http://www.kp44.org/ftp/PFD_Survey.pdf)

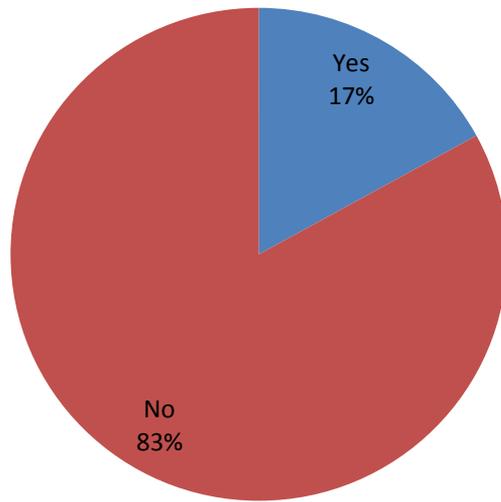
Cruising Sailors were polled as to their experiences with inflatable life vests. 75 people responded.

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# 1 Have you ever had an inflatable PFD fail a manual inflation test?

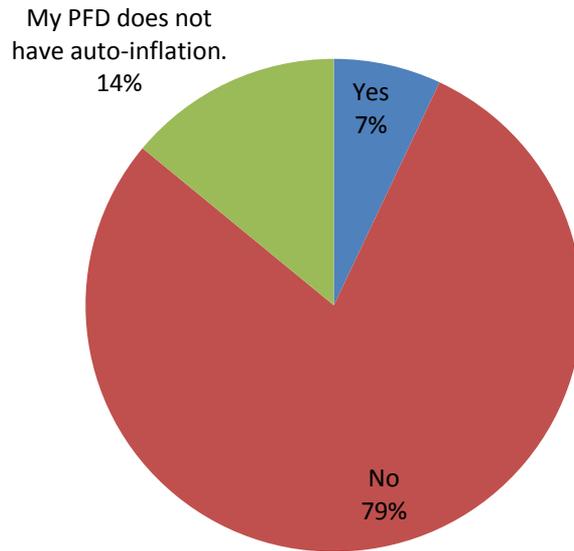
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Value	Percent	Count
Yes	17.3%	13
No	82.7%	62
Total		75

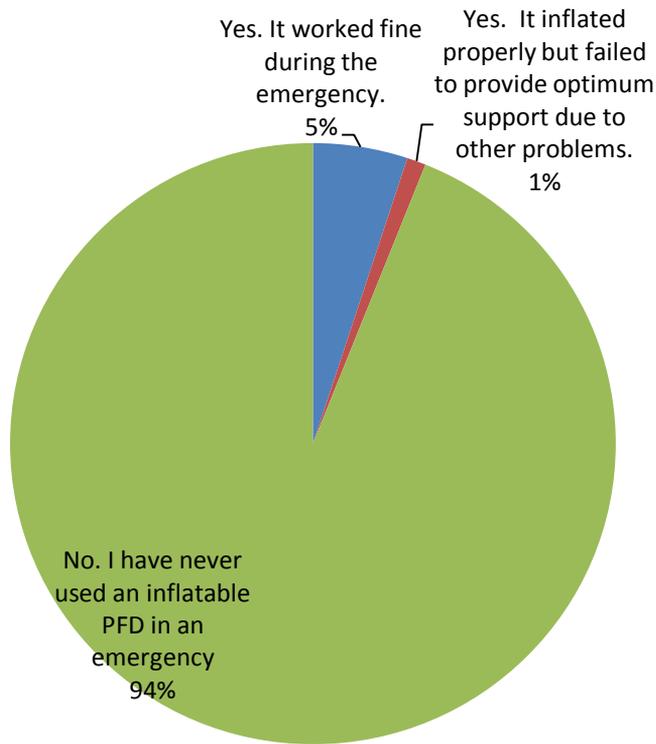
## 2 Have you ever had an inflatable PFD fail to automatically inflate?

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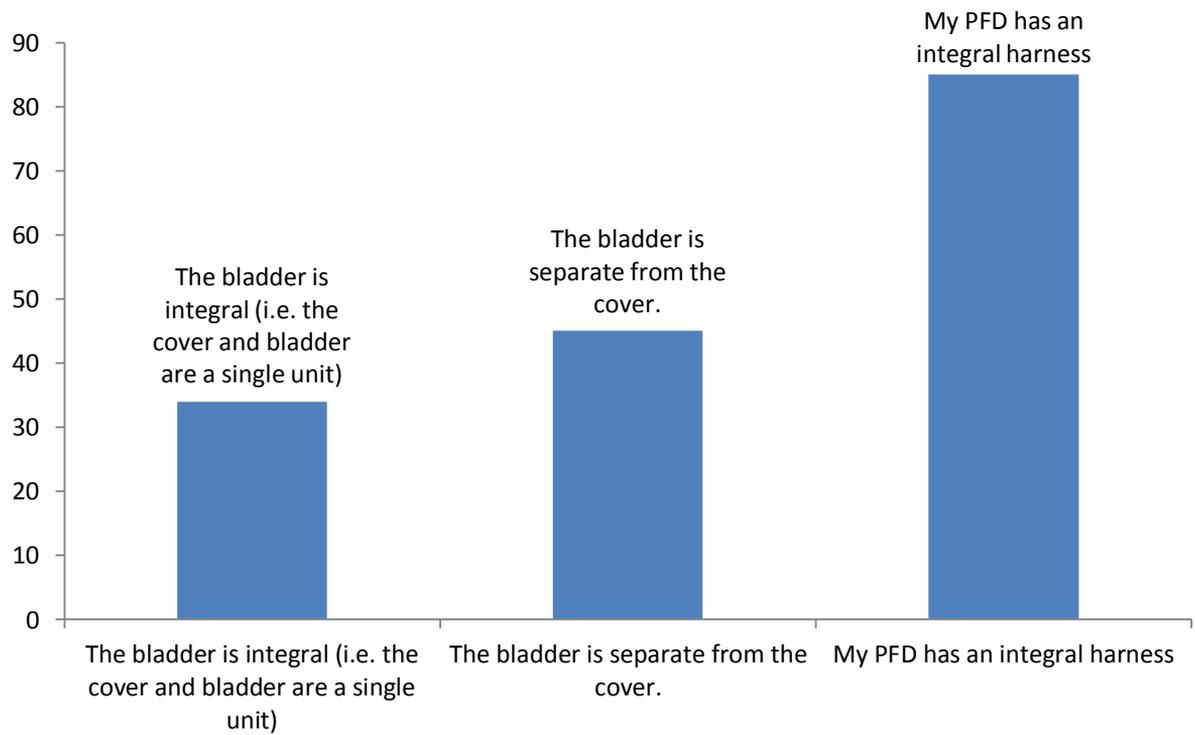
Value	Percent	Count
Yes	6.9%	5
No	79.2%	57
My PFD does not have auto-inflation.	13.9%	10
Total		72

### 3 Have you ever had an inflatable PFD fail during an emergency?



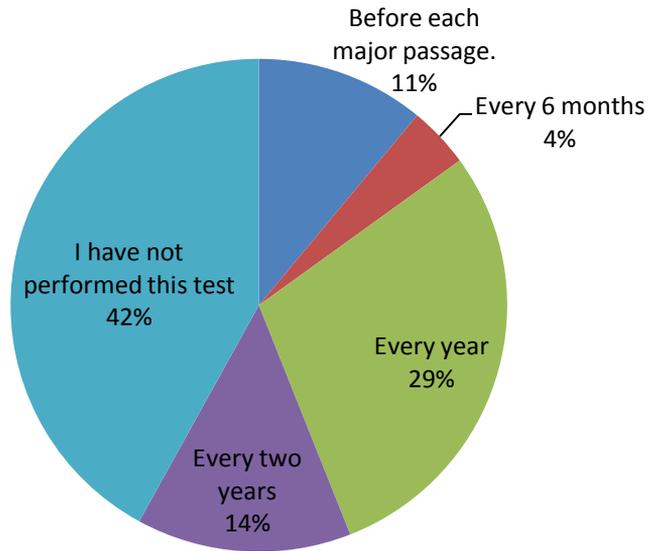
Value	Percent	Count
Yes. It failed to auto-inflate	0.0%	0
Yes. If failed to manually inflate or to hold air.	0.0%	0
Yes. It worked fine during the emergency.	5.4%	4
Yes. It failed to inflate both manually and	0.0%	0
Yes. It inflated properly but failed to provide	1.4%	1
No. I have never used an inflatable PFD in an	93.2%	69
Total		74

## 4 Details of your inflatable PFD?



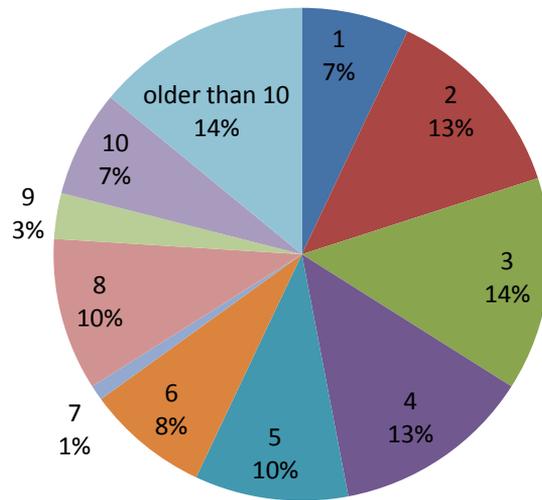
Value	Percent	Count
The bladder is integral (i.e. the cover and bladder are a single unit)	34.3%	25
The bladder is separate from the cover.	45.2%	33
My PFD has an integral harness	84.9%	62
Total		73

## 5 How often to you test the inflatable FPD with a manual inflation test.



Value	Percent	Count
Before each major passage.	11.0%	8
Every 6 months	4.1%	3
Every year	28.8%	21
Every two years	13.7%	10
I have not performed this test	42.5%	31
Total		73

## 6 How many years have you owned your PFD (if you have more than one PFD use age of the newest one)?



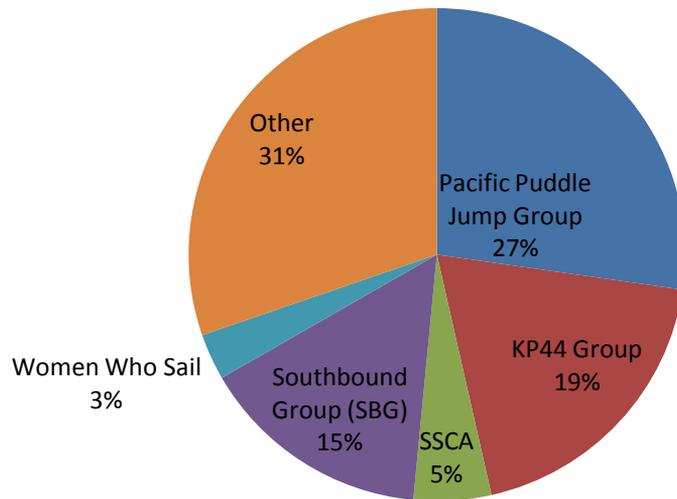
Value	Percent	Count
1	7.0%	5
2	12.7%	9
3	14.1%	10
4	12.7%	9
5	9.9%	7
6	8.5%	6
7	1.4%	1
8	9.9%	7
9	2.8%	2
10	7.0%	5
older than 10	14.1%	10
Total		71

## Statistics

Sum	291.0
Average	4.8
StdDev	2.7
Max	10.0

## 7 How did you hear about this survey?

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Value	Percent	Count
Pacific Puddle Jump Group	27.4%	20
KP44 Group	19.2%	14
SSCA	5.5%	4
Circumnavigation Group	0.0%	0
Southbound Group (SBG)	15.1%	11
Women Who Sail	2.7%	2
Other	30.1%	22
Total		73

## 8 Please enter any comments or your experiences with inflatable PFDs:

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3 of 5 failed the inflation test. The older units passed. Newer integral bladders failed.

Emergency was with military gear.

Great survey thx

I did the first manual inflation test on my oldest PFD a few months ago and it held up well.

I have blindly used mine without testing

Look after them and they will look after you.

Manually inflated both PFDs and both failed

My auto-inflatables have a habit of accidentally inflating on rough, wet passages

Never thought to do this simple test.

No longer depend on inflatable

No problems.

Our two 20 year old West Marine inflatables have passed regular inspections

SOSpenders units (2) 12 years old w/harness. Still good.

Should definitely check them, but mainly just rely on it as a harness.

SOSpenders 1 failed and the other held air

We have 2 Mustangs. Never had a problem manually inflating them.

Will certainly test the PFD as soon as I'm back on board in a month or so!

Will test mine-both Mustang

adults are more likely to wear inflatables than non-inflatables

Always used the Mustang brand; when inflated severely limits your movement.

for #s 1 & 2 there has been no chance to fail because not tested/used in emergency

I'll be taking testing more seriously

You should also survey of life rafts. I took my REVERE in to be repacked and there was a hole in it from improper packing from factory.

When we tried to replace the auto-inflation on our Mustang PFDs they recommended we try manual inflating first -- my PDF failed.... :(

Hi Jeff, tested 4 units today, 1 failed. a 2003 west marine/ SOSpenders model with bladder not part of cover. 2 west marine/Stearns PFDs and 1 mustang PFD passed the test

I have always been diligent about replacing the cartridge, but hadn't thought about a manual (or auto) test. Sheesh - quite embarrassed about that now. One more item for the checklist. PS - please note that your question 3 has an extra word 'fail' in the question. Could be confusing for some, although I'm sure most will understand the intent of the question. Cheers.

Jeff, Thanks to your recent suggestion, we just checked both of our Sterns PFDs (at the END of our 8 year circumnavigation!) Both checked OK, but we added the check to our 4 page passage prep. checklist (copy available) Thanks, Dave

Wife & I have mustang auto-inflation based on hydrostatic pressure. We tested them last year at a Sea Survival course "live fire" exercise. Both PFDs inflated automatically after a second or two in the water, needing a bit of depth to trigger activation. I am very confident they will work again. we didn't try manual inflation, but I will!

Mfg. requires them to be tested at least annually. As with any safety gear, it is only useful if it is periodically inspected and tested.

Have never had one fail a manual inflation test even at 6 years old. I do usually replace them at about 4 years.

We have never had an issue but last summer in an anchorage a fellow fell out of his dinghy and his auto inflate PDF inflated but then deflated. He later found out it was due to the valve failure in the manual inflate tube. It was tuck open

One inflated in the closet. I now disconnect the auto-inflation on it. The second has not auto inflated. Question #2 needs a 'have not tested' answer.

I get ours sent off to notable Mustang Re-Cert shop to make sure all PFDs hold current inspection certificates...

My Mustang auto saved my life when going overboard on a west bound southern crossing back in 2008.

Your survey has made me realize that I need to do a regular test of my PFDs - thanks a real oversight on my part

My PFDs are new and have not been worn as yet. There were several old 14+yrs left by PO I manually operated inflator and it worked ok. All were discarded.

All are Mustang products but of two different models. The earlier model seems to have more robust construction but both types have held-up well

I had the indicator go red on one PFD (at two years old) so replaced both (we have two) with rebuild kits. Tested both before rebuilding by jumping in water. They both worked fine (even one with red indicator).

## 9 Response Location

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