

**Sea Tow Foundation**  
for Boating Safety and Education

# Life Jacket Drive Manual



*Produced under a grant from the Sport Fish Restoration and  
Boating Trust Fund, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard.*

The Sea Tow Foundation received grant funding in 2014 from the Sport Fish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard, to develop a nationwide Life Jacket Drive campaign to encourage people to donate new and gently used life jackets that can be repurposed in life jacket loaner stands around the country. The following guide has been updated in 2018 to help your organization to utilize the life jacket drive program in your local area.

**Goal of the Life Jacket Drive:** To collect new or gently used life jackets that can be used with a life jacket loaner program.

**WHY** host a Life Jacket Drive?

1. It's a perfect chance to show how great you work with your local community.
2. Buying new life jackets is expensive.
3. It keeps perfectly good life jackets out of landfills.
4. It helps restock your life jacket loaner stand or supply life jackets for a new stand.

**HOW** do I go about hosting a Life Jacket Drive?

1. Contact the Sea Tow Foundation at 888-276-7691 or at [info@boatingsafety.com](mailto:info@boatingsafety.com) to get started.
2. This is available to for-profit businesses, non-profit organizations, government agencies, adults, kids, or anyone.

**WHEN** should I host a Life Jacket Drive?

1. The end of the boating season, as people are cleaning out their boats to put them up for the winter, they can donate life jackets to your drive.
2. The beginning of the boating season, when people get ready to head out on the water, they may find that their children have outgrown their life jackets over the winter.
3. During big events, festivals or holiday celebrations or anytime a lot of people are going to be gathered around. You could even make a donated life jacket as their free admission to the festivities.
4. Any time is a good time to host a Life Jacket Drive.

**WHERE** should I set up the Life Jacket Drive?

You can really do this anywhere in your local community where boaters visit. Here is just a short list of some locations, but there are lots more out there, so let us know if you come up with any other ideas.

1. Your Office
2. Marinas
3. Fuel Docks
4. Waterside Restaurants
5. Marine Stores
6. Local Schools
7. Gyms
8. Community Centers

9. Fire Departments
10. Bait and Tackle Shops
11. Public Library
12. Your own ideal location

**WHO** should I work with to host a Life Jacket Drive?

You can work with any group to help you whether they are for-profit businesses or government agencies. Here is a quick list of suggestions, but feel free to send us more ideas:

1. Owners and managers of the locations listed in the WHERE section
2. Civic Groups (Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, etc.)
3. Schools (sports teams, clubs, parent associations)
4. Scouting Groups
5. Churches
6. State Boating Law Enforcement Agency
7. Neighborhood Associations
8. Other non-profit organizations

**WHAT** else do I need to know?

1. All of the press release templates, signage, and planning have been done for you.
2. Whistles and information cards will be mailed out to you along with the decals for the boxes. They are all free!
3. Any box will work for the Life Jacket Drive. You can reuse one that you have or you can order a new one through [Uline](https://www.uline.com) which is the one that we have in the example photo at the top of the page. Either the 40 or 50 gallon size will work.
4. The Sea Tow Foundation staff are always here to answer questions and address your concerns. Send us an email at [info@boatingsafety.com](mailto:info@boatingsafety.com) or call us at 888-276-7691.

## HOW TO APPROACH LOCATIONS ABOUT HOSTING A LIFE JACKET DRIVE DONATION BIN

1. Start with the partners that you already know and do business with.
  - Marinas
  - Restaurants
  - Fuel Docks
  - Repair Facilities
  - Parks
  - Other Non-Profit Organizations
2. Set up a Life Jacket Drive donation box with attached signage and take it to the location. Ask if they would be willing to have the box placed in or near their location to collect used life jackets to replenish the Life Jacket Loaner Station or to set up a new one in your area.
3. Explain how often you plan to check on the donation box and how long you plan to keep the box at that location. Provide your contact information to them so that they can call you if the box is full in between your visits.

## HOW TO PROMOTE YOUR LIFE JACKET DRIVE

### 1. Sample Social Media Posts

- a. Come out to [LOCATION] to donate your new or gently used life jackets to the [ORGANIZATION] Life Jacket Drive and help keep other boaters safe on the water.
- b. Have your kids outgrown their life jackets? Before you discard them, consider donating them to the [ORGANIZATION] Life Jacket Drive at [LOCATION].
- c. Did your boat come with extra life jackets that you aren't planning to use? If so, bring them to [LOCATION] and donate them to the [ORGANIZATION] Life Jacket Drive.

### 2. Use the Press Release Template on the Next Page

PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE



# Sea Tow Foundation

for Boating Safety and Education

**For Immediate Release (DATE)**

**[ORGANIZATION NAME] to Hold a Life Jacket Drive on [DATE]**

*Collecting New and Gently Used Life Jackets to Reuse in Life Jacket Loaner Stations*

**[LOCATION, DATE]**– **[ORGANIZATION NAME]** will hold a Life Jacket Drive on at **[LOCATION]** during **[TIME PERIOD]**. The purpose of the Life Jacket Drive is to collect donations of new and slightly used life jackets, which will be placed on area Life Jacket Loaner Stations to keep boaters safe when on or around the **[NAME OF LOCAL WATER]**.



**[ORGANIZATION NAME]** maintains **[NUMBER]** Life Jacket Loaner Stations throughout the area. Each station is stocked with life jackets in a range of sizes that are available for boaters to borrow free of charge for a day on the water. These stations are located at **[LIST OF LOCATIONS OF STATIONS]**.

Sea Tow Foundation Executive Director, Gail R. Kulp said, “Children often outgrow their life jackets and boaters often find that they want to update their own life jackets, but there is no need to throw away the old life jackets. This Life Jacket Drive will allow **[ORGANIZATION NAME]** to utilize donated life jackets from the local community to extend the life of our

Life Jacket Loaner Program, by providing a use for life jackets that have been outgrown or are no longer needed.”

Since 2008, the non-profit Sea Tow Foundation, through its Life Jacket Loaner Program, has lent nearly 50,000 life jackets nationwide to boaters who need them for a day on the water. The majority of the life jackets are purchased through a series of grants from the Sport Fish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund, as administered by the U.S. Coast Guard. However, the program does receive additional life jackets from generous individual and corporate donors.

Kulp noted that dog life jackets have also been collected and are added to the loaner stations. In addition, boaters can donate new life jackets purchased from one of the many marine or retail stores in the area. “Protect a life. Donate a vest,” she added.

[ORGANIZATION NAME]'s [REPRESENTATIVE] said: “Now is your chance to give back to the boating community. Together, we can make sure that everyone has a life jacket to wear while on the water at [LOCATION].”

### **Sea Tow Foundation**

With a focus on safe boating practices that result in fun on the water, the Sea Tow Foundation – a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization – was established in 2007 by Sea Tow Founder Capt. Joe Frohnhoefer. After his passing in 2015, Captain Joe’s legacy continues as the Foundation brings attention to the number of preventable boating-related accidents, injuries, and deaths, and directly addresses prevention methods through education and awareness. More than 450 life jacket loaner stands are now available across the United States and the Foundation’s Designate a Sober Skipper program continues to grow. For more information, please visit [BoatingSafety.com](http://BoatingSafety.com).

### **About [ORGANIZATION]**

#### *Media Contacts*

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## LIFE JACKET DRIVE

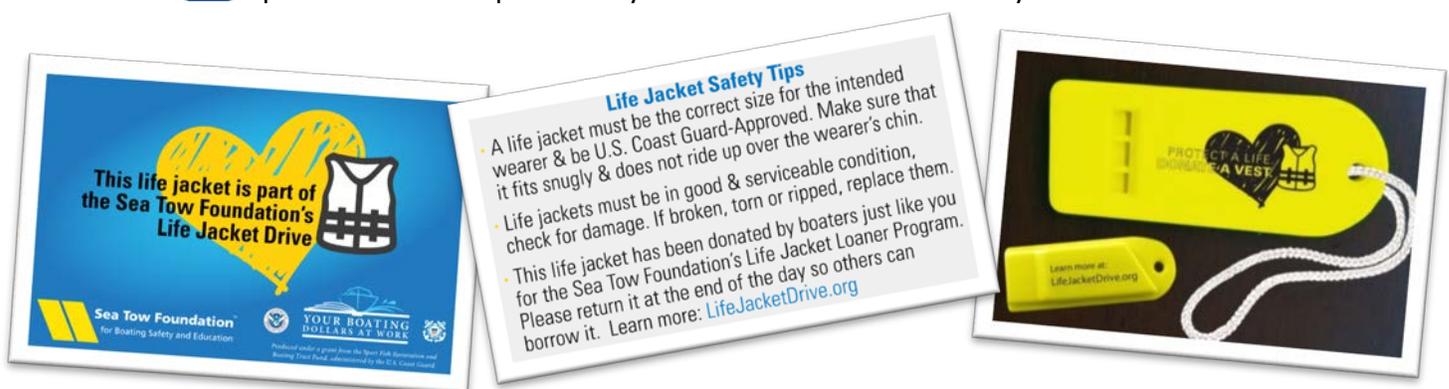
The Sea Tow Foundation developed the Life Jacket Drive to collect new and gently used life jackets from the public to be repurposed in the life jacket loaner programs.

Life jackets are expensive and grant funding is not guaranteed each year, so the Life Jacket Drive is one way to help ensure our Life Jacket Stand hosts will be able to keep their programs running throughout the year.

For more information, visit <http://www.lifejacketdrive.org/>.

### HOW TO GET STARTED

- 1** Contact the Sea Tow Foundation at 888-276-7691 or [info@boatingsafety.com](mailto:info@boatingsafety.com). We will provide you with the marketing and public relations materials to make your Life Jacket Drive **SHINE!**
- 2** Pick a timeframe and location to host the Life Jacket Drive and the Sea Tow Foundation will provide you with decals for your collection box along with signage that explains the program. The Sea Tow Foundation will also include a checklist to inspect the donated life jackets as well as whistles and cards to mark each life jacket collected.
- 3** After you've collected the life jackets, use the provided marketing materials to send a press release and photos to your local media to celebrate your success!

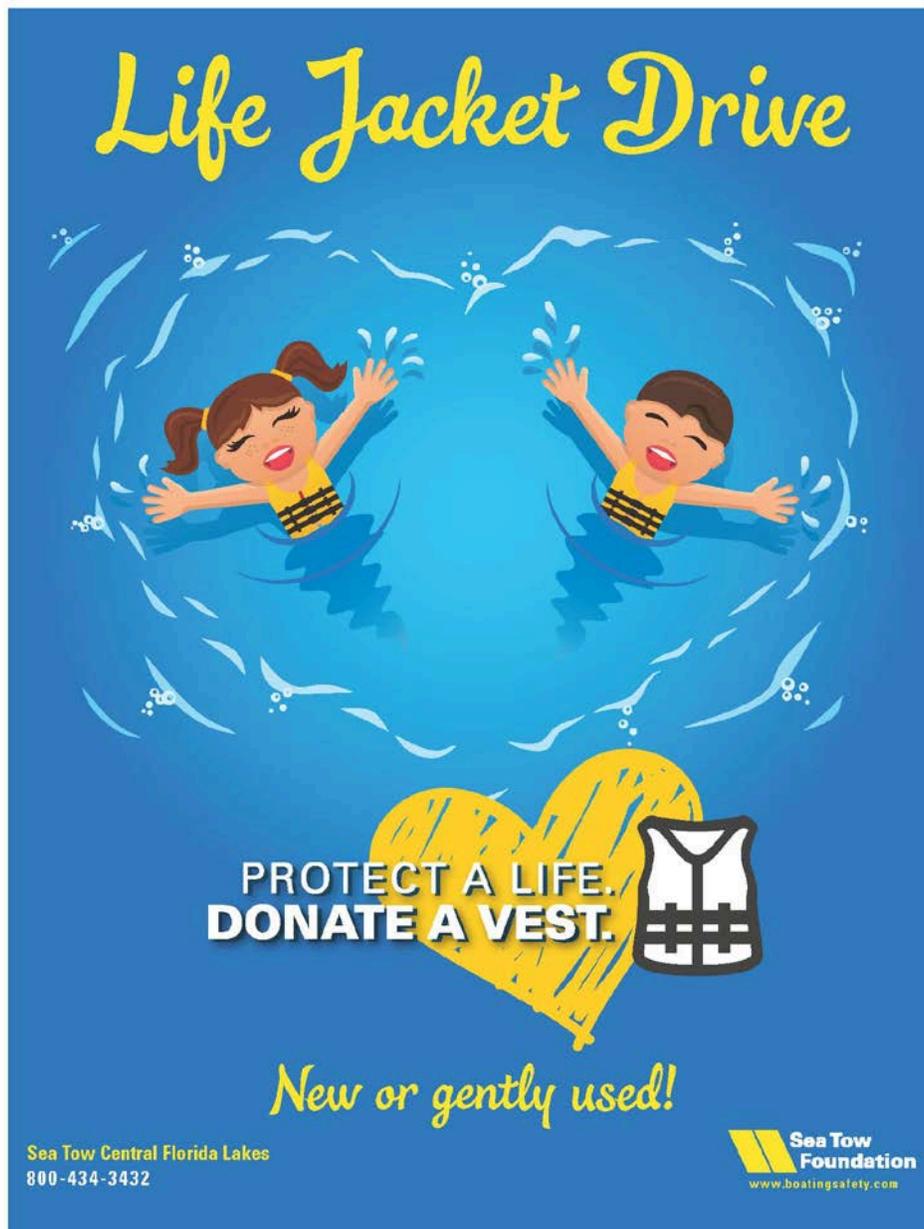


These cards will be attached to all donated life jackets along with the bright yellow safety whistle.

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### SIGNAGE EXAMPLE 1

(To request a copy for your Organization, contact the Sea Tow Foundation)



The sign features a blue background with the title "Life Jacket Drive" in a large, yellow, cursive font at the top. Below the title is an illustration of a young girl and a young boy, both wearing yellow and black striped life jackets, swimming happily in blue water. At the bottom of the sign, the text "PROTECT A LIFE. DONATE A VEST." is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. To the right of this text is a black and white icon of a life jacket. Below the icon is a yellow heart shape with a brushstroke texture. Underneath the heart, the phrase "New or gently used!" is written in a yellow, cursive font. In the bottom left corner, the text "Sea Tow Central Florida Lakes" and "800-434-3432" is displayed in a small, white, sans-serif font. In the bottom right corner, the Sea Tow Foundation logo is shown, consisting of a yellow and black graphic element followed by the text "Sea Tow Foundation" and the website "www.boatingsafety.com" in a small, white, sans-serif font.

**Life Jacket Drive**

**PROTECT A LIFE.  
DONATE A VEST.**

*New or gently used!*

Sea Tow Central Florida Lakes  
800-434-3432

**Sea Tow  
Foundation**  
www.boatingsafety.com

**SIGNAGE EXAMPLE 2**

(These decals are available for free to add to your collection box.)



## USED LIFE JACKET INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Before a donated life jacket can be repurposed and used in a life jacket loaner station, you must inspect the life jacket and ensure that it is approved to be used.

1. Check the label inside the life jacket to make sure it is U.S. Coast Guard approved. The label should be readable and clear.
2. All zippers, buckles, straps and other fasteners are intact and work properly. Tug on the buckles and straps to make sure they don't break.
3. There are no rips, tears or mold on the life jacket.
4. The life jacket flotation foam does not appear to be damaged and the life jacket will float if placed in water.
5. For inflatable life jackets, the air bladder should be able to be inflated and stay inflated with no rips or tears to the material. Hold an inflated life jacket underwater and check for air bubbles that indicate holes in the life jacket.

If all of the above items are satisfied, the life jacket is considered to be in "serviceable condition" by the U.S. Coast Guard and can re-used in the Life Jacket Drive Program.

If even one of these items is not meant, DISCARD the life jacket and cut it in pieces to make sure it is not used by anyone.