

Buoyant aids for swimming instruction —

Part 2: Safety requirements and test methods for buoyant aids to be held

The European Standard EN 13138-2:2002 has the status of a
British Standard

ICS 97.220.40

National foreword

This British Standard is the official English language version of EN 13138-2:2002.

The UK participation in its preparation was entrusted by Technical Committee SW/136, Sports, playground and other recreational equipment, to Subcommittee SW/136/8, Swimming equipment, which has the responsibility to:

- aid enquirers to understand the text;
- present to the responsible European committee any enquiries on the interpretation, or proposals for change, and keep the UK interests informed;
- monitor related international and European developments and promulgate them in the UK.

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Summary of pages

This document comprises a front cover, an inside front cover, the EN title page, pages 2 to 17 and a back cover.

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Amendments issued since publication

Amd. No.	Date	Comments

This British Standard was published under the authority of the Standards Policy and Strategy Committee on 7 May 2004

© BSI 7 May 2004

ISBN 0 580 43747 7

English version

Buoyant aids for swimming instruction - Part 2: Safety requirements and test methods for buoyant aids to be held

Aides à la flottabilité pour l'apprentissage de la natation -
Partie 2: Exigences et méthodes d'essai relatives aux
dispositifs à tenir

Auftriebshilfen für das Schwimmenlernen - Teil 2:
Sicherheitstechnische Anforderungen und Prüfverfahren für
Auftriebshilfen, die gehalten werden

This European Standard was approved by CEN on 10 August 2002.

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Foreword

This document (EN 13138-2:2002) has been prepared by Technical Committee CEN /TC 162, "Protective clothing including hand and arm protection and lifejackets", the secretariat of which is held by DIN.

This European Standard shall be given the status of a national standard, either by publication of an identical text or by endorsement, at the latest by April 2003, and conflicting national standards shall be withdrawn at the latest by April 2003.

The annexes A to E are normative.

According to the CEN/CENELEC Internal Regulations, the national standards organizations of the following countries are bound to implement this European Standard: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Introduction

The entire process of learning to swim is considered to include three stages:

- becoming familiar with the water environment and movements through it;
- acquiring skills in standard swimming strokes;
- developing more advanced swimming strokes and techniques.

Buoyant aids for swimming instructions (in brief: "swimming aid(s)") are intended to assist persons (in particular children) to learn to swim. The design and purpose of the devices are related to the above stages.

Swimming aids are intended to give the user positive buoyancy in the water whilst maintaining the correct body position for swimming. However, it should not be assumed that standard conformity of the devices will by itself eliminate the risk of drowning as this depends also on the behaviour of the user and any supervision.

Although this standard sets performance requirements to ensure that swimming aids perform appropriately, it is essential that the devices are used correctly and under constant and close supervision. It is important to ensure that they are securely fitted to the appropriate size of wearer and that when correctly fitted, they cannot become displaced. Swim seats however shall allow immediate escape in case of capsizing. The use of these devices shall be restricted to water out of standing depth of the wearer.

The highest degree of protection against drowning can only be achieved by using life jackets. It is essential that there is a clear distinction between devices intended to preserve life and those which are intended only to assist buoyancy for the user when learning to swim. As swimming aids are not life preservers, they should only be used in swimming pools and other situations free from current, tides and waves.

The bulk storage of some sorts of swimming aids can, under certain conditions, result in a potential fire hazard. The perceived risk of such a hazard was evaluated against the actual risk to the user from materials treated with certain known toxic fire retardant chemicals. However, the fire hazard is less of a problem to the user than the risk associated with the swimming aids being put in the mouth, especially by children. For this reason, flammability requirements are not included in the standard.

For the above reasons and to differentiate these devices from aquatic toys, advisory safety measures, including marking, warning notices and user instructions are included in this standard.

The range both of the design and function of swimming aids varies considerably and for this reason, the standard has been prepared in three parts, namely devices that are intended to allow the wearer to become familiar with water (passive wearer), devices that are worn (active wearer) and those devices that are held by the user for special training purposes.

Part 1 of the standard is for devices that are worn or carried on the body (class B devices for an active user). They are intended to introduce the user to the range of swimming strokes.

Part 2 of the standard is for devices that are held either in the hands, by the body or between the legs (class C devices for an active user) and are intended to assist with improving specific elements of the swimming stroke. For adult beginners or more advanced users they can also be used for further stages of the process to learn to swim.

Part 3, deals with swim seats as typical and common devices to assist children up to 36 month in their first attempts to learn to swim i.e. to get familiar with the "in-water-environment" and moving through it (class A devices, passive user). The child sits inside the seat, the seat provides buoyancy and lateral support to keep the child's head above water level.

This part of the standard, Part 2, deals with devices that are held either in the hands, between the legs or by the body.