



**Homeland
Security**

Science and Technology

Highlight

U.S. Department of Homeland Security



System Assessment and Validation for Emergency Responders

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) established the System Assessment and Validation for Emergency Responders (SAVER) Program to assist emergency responders making procurement decisions.

Located within the Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) of DHS, the SAVER Program conducts objective assessments and validations on commercial equipment and systems, and provides those results along with other relevant equipment information to the emergency response community in an operationally useful form. SAVER provides information on equipment that falls within the categories listed in the DHS Authorized Equipment List (AEL). The SAVER Program mission includes:

- Conducting impartial, practitioner-relevant, operationally oriented assessments and validations of emergency responder equipment;
- Providing information that enables decision makers and responders to better select, procure, use, and maintain emergency responder equipment.

Information provided by the SAVER Program will be shared nationally with the responder community, providing a life- and cost-saving asset to DHS, as well as to federal, state, and local responders.

The SAVER Program is supported by a network of technical agents who perform assessment and validation activities. Further, SAVER focuses primarily on two main questions for the emergency responder community: "What equipment is available?" and "How does it perform?"

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Visit SAVER on the RKB Web site:

<https://www.rkb.us/saver>

Personal Flotation Devices for Swift Water Rescue

Swift water is powerful, relentless water moving down an incline. Rapids, streams, and waterfalls are examples of swift water and may be naturally occurring or driven by floodwaters. The most basic piece of swift water rescue equipment is the personal flotation device (PFD). There are many types and styles of PFDs, including life jackets, swim vests, and flotation and buoyancy aids. The United States Coast Guard (USCG), other federal agencies, and most states require vessel operators to carry a wearable USCG-approved PFD for every person onboard when operating in their jurisdictional waters.

To assist emergency responders in selecting PFDs for procurement, Texas A&M Engineering—Texas Engineering Extension Service Urban Search & Rescue, in coordination with the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center, Charleston, has prepared a series of documents for the SAVER Program. The *Personal Flotation Devices for Swift Water Rescue TechNote* details the types of PFDs, their applications, purchasing considerations, and care and inspection. The *Personal Flotation Devices Market Survey Report* provides a snapshot of the current commercial marketplace for PFDs. The *Personal Flotation Devices Application Note* provides information and recommendations on the operational usage of PFDs.

All reports will be placed on the on the SAVER Web site (<https://www.rkb.us/SAVER>) as they become available. Information on other technologies can also be found on the Web site.



Personal Flotation Device