



BSI Standards Publication

Buoyant aids for swimming instruction

Part 1: Safety requirements and test methods for buoyant aids to be worn

National foreword

This British Standard is the UK implementation of EN 13138-1:2021, incorporating corrigendum February 2022. It supersedes BS EN 13138-1:2014, which is withdrawn.

The start and finish of text introduced or altered by corrigendum is indicated in the text by tags. Text altered by CEN corrigendum February 2022 is indicated in the text by AC1 AC1.

The UK participation in its preparation was entrusted to Technical Committee SW/136/8, Swimming pools and aquatic equipment.

A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its committee manager.

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Auftriebshilfen für das Schwimmenlernen - Teil 1: Sicherheitstechnische Anforderungen und Prüfverfahren für am Körper getragene Auftriebshilfen

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European foreword

This document (EN 13138-1:2021) 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of an identical text or by endorsement, at the latest by April 2022 and conflicting national standards shall be withdrawn at the latest by April 2022.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. CEN shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

This document supersedes EN 13138-1:2014.

This document has been prepared under a Standardization Request given to CEN by the European Commission and the European Free Trade Association, and supports essential requirements of EU Directive(s) / Regulation(s).

For relationship with EU Directive(s) / Regulation(s), see informative Annex ZA, which is an integral part of this document.

Annex N provides details of significant technical changes between this European Standard and the previous edition EN 13138-1:2014.

EN 13138, *Buoyant aids for swimming instruction* consists of the following parts dealing with buoyant swimming devices for swimming instructions for the various stages of the learning process:

- *Part 1: Safety requirements and test methods for buoyant aids to be worn*
- *Part 2: Safety requirements and test methods for buoyant aids to be held*
- *Part 3: Safety requirements and test methods for swim seats into which a user is positioned*

Any feedback and questions on this document should be directed to the users’ national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found on the CEN website.

According to the CEN-CENELEC Internal Regulations, the national standards organisations of the following countries are bound to implement this European Standard: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

0 Introduction

0.1 Design and materials

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

- getting familiar with the water environment and movements in it, and
- acquiring skills in standard swimming strokes.

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

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

Although this document sets performance requirements to ensure that swimming devices perform appropriately, it is essential that the swimming 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 user and that when correctly fitted, they cannot become displaced. Swim seats however should allow immediate escape in case of capsizing. Therefore, the use of these swimming devices is recommended to be restricted to water out of standing depth of the user.

The highest degree of protection against drowning can only be achieved by using lifejackets. It is essential that there is a clear distinction between rescue intended to preserve life and those which are intended only to assist buoyancy for the user when learning to swim. As swimming devices 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 types of swimming devices could, 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 devices being put in the mouth, especially by children. For this reason, flammability requirements are not included in this document.

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

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

- Part 1 of this series is only for products that are securely attached to the body (Class B swimming devices = for an active user). They are intended to introduce the user to the range of swimming strokes.
- Part 2 of this series is for products that are held either in the hands or by the body (class C swimming 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 of this series deals only with products (swim seats) to assist children up to 36 months in their first attempts to learn to swim (i.e. to get familiar with the –in-water-environment) and moving through it. The child is positioned inside the buoyant structure, which provides buoyancy and lateral support to the body, thereby keeping the child's head above water level (class A swimming devices = for a passive user).