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de l'accréditation, de la sécurité et qualité  
des produits et services

**ILNAS-EN 13138-3:2007**

**Buoyant aids for swimming instruction  
- Part 3: Safety requirements and test  
methods for swim seats to be worn**

Auftriebshilfen für das Schwimmenlernen  
- Teil 3: Sicherheitstechnische  
Anforderungen und Prüfverfahren für  
Schwimmsitze, die am Körper getragen

Aides à la flottabilité pour  
l'apprentissage de la natation - Partie 3:  
Exigences de sécurité et méthodes  
d'essai relatives aux dispositifs dans

**10/2007**



## National Foreword

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**Buoyant aids for swimming instruction - Part 3: Safety  
requirements and test methods for swim seats to be worn**

Aides à la flottabilité pour l'apprentissage de la natation -  
Partie 3: Exigences de sécurité et méthodes d'essai  
relatives aux dispositifs dans lesquels l'enfant est placé,  
sièges flottants

Auftriebshilfen für das Schwimmenlernen - Teil 3:  
Sicherheitstechnische Anforderungen und Prüfverfahren für  
Schwimmsitze, die am Körper getragen werden

This European Standard was approved by CEN on 1 September 2007.

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This European Standard exists in three official versions (English, French, German). A version in any other language made by translation under the responsibility of a CEN member into its own language and notified to the CEN Management Centre has the same status as the official versions.

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## Foreword

This document (EN 13138-3:2007) 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of an identical text or by endorsement, at the latest by April 2008, and conflicting national standards shall be withdrawn at the latest by April 2008.

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

This document supersedes EN 13138-3:2003.

Annex K provides details of significant technical changes between this European Standard and the previous edition.

This European Standard is one of a series consisting of three standards dealing with buoyant devices for swimming instructions for the various stages of the learning process.

EN 13138-1, *Buoyant aids for swimming instruction – Part 1: Part 1: Safety requirements and test methods for buoyant aids to be worn*

EN 13138-2, *Buoyant aids for swimming instruction – Part 2: Safety requirements and test methods for buoyant aids to be held*

EN 13138-3, *Buoyant aids for swimming instruction – Part 3: Safety requirements and test methods for swim seats to be worn*

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

## Introduction

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

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

Buoyant devices for swimming instructions (in brief: swimming device(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 devices 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 devices 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 user and that when correctly fitted, they cannot become displaced. It is however essential that swim seats allow immediate escape in case of capsizing. Therefore the use of these devices is recommended 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 devices 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 sorts 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 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 devices varies considerably and for this reason, the standard for swimming devices has been prepared in three parts, namely devices that are intended to allow the user to become familiar with water (passive user), devices that are worn (active user) and those devices that are held by the user for special training purposes.

### Part 1 of the standard

is for devices that are securely attached to 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 of the standard**

deals with 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 devices = for a passive user). Swim seats allow young children to experience the water environment and being moved through it. Movements of lower limbs and arms are possible. The use of swim seats does however not replicate any form of a correct swimming stroke.

Swim seats complying with this standard improve the in-water stability and minimise the entrapment risk in case of capsizing. Children in swim seats do however require very close parental supervision. Overload beyond specified body weight, breaking waves and violent external forces are remaining risks that can cause capsizing. Shallow water is likely increase the risk of capsizing and to hinder or block the escape from the seat in case of emergency.