



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®**

## **BOBBER THE WATER SAFETY DOG COSTUME CARE AND USE GUIDELINES**

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# Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
WEAR STANDARDS	3
PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES	3
SAFETY STANDARDS	4
SUITING UP	5
CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE	6
FAN BATTERY	6
REPAIR PROCEDURES	6
STORAGE	7
STORAGE CONTAINERS	7
WARRANTY	7
CONTACT LIST	7
APPENDIX A: Activity Hazard Analysis Sheet	8
APPENDIX B: Costume Pre- and Post-Checklists	10

## INTRODUCTION

Bobber the Water Safety Dog is a trademarked character of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and in such cannot be reproduced or duplicated without permission from the USACE National Operations Center for Water Safety Manager.

The Bobber the Water Safety Dog costume is specifically designed for delivery of water safety education. Other educational purposes such as fire safety, environmental stewardship, etc are inappropriate because they dilute the identity and branding of the Bobber the Water Safety Dog Campaign.

To ensure quality control, the costume is produced exclusively by Robotronics Inc. and can only be sold to the USACE. No other company has permission to develop and sell the costume. USACE offices are granted general approval to purchase and to wear the Bobber costume.

The USACE National Operations Center for Water Safety has developed the following guidelines for use of the Bobber costume.

## WEAR STANDARDS

- The Bobber costume can only be worn by a USACE employee or volunteer. Do not wear the costume if you have a heart condition, neck problems, or other medical condition. If in doubt, you should not wear the costume.
- In order to maintain the Bobber the Water Safety Dog safety image and character, requests for Bobber at certain events may need to be evaluated for appropriateness of an appearance. Events that are not compatible with the safety purpose should be declined.
- Because of the need to stay consistent with the image the costume must be worn in its entirety including head, paws, feet and tail with certain exceptions regarding the tongue and life jacket. The costume can be used with or without the tongue. The life jacket must be worn at all times unless Bobber is part of an interpretive program that includes showing how a life jacket is worn properly. The program can start with Bobber not wearing a life jacket and then the life jacket is put properly on Bobber during the program.
- Do not operate any vehicle or vessels or eat or drink while wearing the costume. While wearing the costume you should never operate or be a passenger in a boat or any vessels because the costume life jacket is not a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket.
- Adornments such as pins and buttons should not be placed on the costume. No additional clothing or headgear should be added to the costume.
- The costume must be put on and removed in a private location not in view of the public. When not being worn, the Bobber costume should be kept out of sight.
- The costume should be kept cleaned and in good condition. In order to maintain the costume in a good serviceable condition, it should not be worn in adverse weather.

## PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES

- Customer wearer must remain anonymous at all time and must never take the head of the costume off in public. Also, no pictures should be taken of the wearer not in full costume.

- Bobber does not talk. The wearer of the costume may bark but not talk.
- USACE park rangers accompanying Bobber should be in Class B formal uniform while acting as Bobber's assistant or conducting an interpretive program with Bobber. Since Bobber does not talk the USACE employee accompanying Bobber must be prepared to communicate to the public including sharing important water safety messages.
- Bobber can hand out coloring books and other water safety materials, give hugs, high fives, shake hands and pose for pictures with visitors.
- The wearer should take care not to frighten or startle children. Bend or kneel to allow small children to relate to Bobber at their level. Don't force Bobber onto to children; let them come to Bobber for a hug, high five, or handshake.
- Wearer needs to be animated and respond to the audience while always being dignified, friendly and professional. Such examples are doing thumbs up, waves, or scratching the head. Interact with the handler through gestures; handler should interpret Bobber's actions to the audience.
- The wearer should be mindful of Bobber's safety image and avoid horseplay and refrain from any questionable or inappropriate behavior. Interaction with people in a crude or sexual manner "humping" is considered inappropriate and will tarnish the safety message of Bobber.

#### SAFETY STANDARDS

- Bobber should be accompanied by a USACE employee at all times. The employee serves as Bobber's assistant. The assistant should stay close by Bobber and be prepared to keep the person in the costume safe and not let anyone do anything inappropriate to Bobber.
- Line of sight is restricted in the costume. The assistant needs to help Bobber navigate, avoid obstacles, tripping hazards and standing water. The assistant needs to keep a vigilant eye out for excited and/or abusive children (i.e. pulling the tail). Do not let Bobber become over-crowded. Help the wearer to keep a comfortable distance in large crowds.
- The costume wearer can be subjected to heat exhaustion if in the costume too long. In warm weather, the costume should only be worn for 15 to 20 minutes at a time. The cool-down vest should be worn and the fan in the head of costume should be operable and on at all times while wearing the costume. The wearer should drink plenty of water prior to an appearance so they do not become dehydrated. Cool down breaks (removing any part of the costume) must be in private. Individuals can take turns wearing the costume.
- The assistant must check on the wearer often by asking if they are okay. Regardless of the situation if the wearer needs a break then take a break no matter what the case may be.
- The wearer and assistant must review the Activity Hazard Analysis sheet located in Appendix A before using the costume.

## SUITING UP

- Place the cooling packs in the freezer overnight before the event. Use one set of the cooling packs in the vest and neck collar. Keep the other set of cooling packs in an ice cooler or freezer that is easy to get to during event.
- The wearer will need to wear socks, shorts and a t-shirt inside the costume. If the cooling vest feels too cold, then consider wearing two t-shirts.
- The wearer will need someone to help them put on the costume properly.
- Make sure you have all the parts of the costume before you start to put it on.
- Put cooling vest and neck collar on.
- Put on the tail and make sure straps are snug and comfortable. Battery for costume head fan should be placed in the tail backpack pouch and then feed the battery line to the top of the costume.
- Put on the body suit up to the waist with the zipper in the back.
- Feed the tail through the hole below the zipper and put the rest of the body suit on.
- Zip up the body suit. Fasten the Velcro® flap over the zipper to cover it up. Important: Fasten Velcro® and snaps around tail so there are no holes around the tail.
- Put costume feet on. Do not wear shoes or bare feet inside the costume. Shoes will distort the shape and bare feet sweat and will spread germs. Make sure socks are clean.
- The cushioned black pads on top of the helmet are attached with Velcro® and are designed to come off for repositioning if needed to create a custom fit.
- Connect the head fan battery pack with the lead wire for the fan that is in the costume head. Connectors simply snap into each other. Check operation of the fan by pushing the on/off switch a couple of times. Tuck any exposed cord into the costume.
- Put on the head by loosening the chin strap and then tighten it to where it is comfortable and the head is straight.
- Important: At the base of the costume head in the back is a buckle. The other part of the buckle is attached to the tail backpack. Buckle together and tighten strap if needed. This will support the head from leaning forward too much. Do not wear the costume unless this strap is buckle and tightened properly.
- Make sure wearer can see out of the costume without any trouble.
- Put the life jacket on, fasten buckles and tighten straps if needed.
- Push up body suit sleeves and put paws on all the way up the arm. Pull body suit sleeves over paw sleeves.

- Bend tongue down and tail up if needed. For droopy tails, see repair procedures section of these guidelines. The dog tag will slip between the vest and ears will flap up on top of the head occasionally, so if these things happen put them back in the proper place as soon as possible.
- Allow the wearer to practice walking in the costume prior to taking them out into public. Make sure wearer is comfortable and that everything fits and is fastened correctly.

#### CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE

- A clean costume will last longer. The costume should not be used if it is in bad condition such as matted fur, holes, broken parts, etc.
- Before and after every use of the costume go over the checklists in Appendix B to make sure you have all the components and that they are in good condition and working properly.
- After you are done wearing the costume spray the inside of the costume feet with a disinfectant. Allow time to air out the costume and for it to dry before storing or shipping.
- Hang the body on a hanger and brush out after every use. Store in a well-ventilated area away from excessive temperatures.
- The body suit and paws can be washed on a cold delicate washing machine cycle using a mild detergent and fabric softener. Do not dry in dryer. Hang the costume up to dry. Brush the costume while it is still damp using a vented brush. Do not dry clean the costume because it will cause the fur to mat.
- The head should be brushed regularly, stored in its natural shape and kept clean with a sponge and a mild detergent such as 303 Fabric Cleaner or an upholstery cleaner. Spray disinfectant can be used on the inside of the head to eliminate odor.
- The feet and life jacket should be kept clean using a mild detergent and a soft cloth. Never store damp.

#### FAN BATTERY

- The battery is a 12 volt rechargeable Gel Cell lead acid type battery. This type of battery is very dependable and safe. It can be repeatedly charged and discharged. The battery should last about 3-4 hours. Charge the battery after every use.
- It is best to not let the battery completely discharge because that shortens the life of the battery and makes recharging more difficult. The battery should not be left in a discharged condition.

#### REPAIR PROCEDURES

- Report all malfunctions to your Division Representative on the National Water Safety Committee. Be sure to include any information regarding repairs that were made. This information can be helpful to other costume owners.
- Minor repairs using a needle and thread, contact adhesive, or hot glue can keep small problems from becoming bigger.

- For major repairs or malfunctions contact Robotronics Service Department. See your costume warranty for additional details.

## STORAGE

- Always store the costume in a clean location and container. Avoid stacking any heavy items on top of the container that may push and distort the shape.
- Never store any item of the costume damp. For normal wear, air out the costume body by hanging on a hanger until dry.
- Allow cooling kit packs to completely thaw out before packing them. If this is not done then moisture will remain inside the plastic bag and may cause mold and/or odors.
- Package costume in a manner that allows the features to remain in their natural shape. Place items in large plastic bags to help keep out moisture and pests. Use bubble wrap to avoid shifting of components. If possible, place a few dryer sheets in with the components to help eliminate any odors.

## STORAGE CONTAINERS

There are several options for containers to store the costume in. These include:

- The Robotronics Carrier This Carrier is meant to be used more as a show kennel to bring in the costume prior to an event and generate interest. Pros of this carrier are that it has handles and allows easy mobility through the use of wheels, includes foam padding liner, and a latch secured lid. Cons are that the show kennel or carrier is not durable and can be broken. It should be used for local transport only.
- Large trash container Use a 60-65 gallon trash container with an attached lid, handle and wheels provides the best size to hold all the costume parts and cooling kit. It is recommended that container be marked "NOT TRASH" so it doesn't get mistaken for a trash can.

## WARRANTY

- Robotronics provides a one year warranty on the costume from the date of purchase.

## CONTACT LIST

Pam Doty  
USACE National Water Safety Program Manager  
819 Taylor Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102  
[Pamela.J.Doty@usace.army.mil](mailto:Pamela.J.Doty@usace.army.mil)  
817-886-1727

Division Representatives on National Water Safety Committee  
Contact Information on NRM Gateway in Water Safety Section

Robotronics:  
1610 West 1600 South, South Springville, UT 84663-3057  
800-762-6876, Sales Dept: Ext 2, Service Dept: Ext 3  
Email: [sales@robotronics.com](mailto:sales@robotronics.com), [service@robotronics.com](mailto:service@robotronics.com), [info@robotronics.com](mailto:info@robotronics.com)  
Website: [www.robotronics.com](http://www.robotronics.com)

# ACTIVITY HAZARDS ANALYSIS

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall Risk Assessment (RAC)

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Activity: Wearing the Bobber the Water Safety Dog Costume

Activity Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared By: \_\_\_\_\_

E=Extremely High Risk H= High Risk M=Moderate Risk L=Low Risk	Probability				
	Frequent	Likely	Occasional	Seldom	Unlikely
Catastrophic	E	E	H	H	M
Critical	E	H	H	M	L
Marginal	H	M	M	L	L
Negligible	M	L	L	L	L

JOB STEPS	HAZARDS	ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE OR MINIMIZE HAZARDS
1. Wearing the Costume	1a. Limited Vision 1b. Limited Hearing 1c. Tripping 1d. Dehydration/Heat Exhaustion 1e. Constriction 1f. Claustrophobia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bobber must be escorted by USACE employee at all times</li> <li>- Bobber escort should repeat questions and comments from public</li> <li>- Wearer requires an assistant to get in and out of the costume</li> <li>- Avoid wearing tight fitting or restrictive clothing under the costume</li> <li>- Drink plenty of water prior to the wearing the costume</li> <li>- Use ice pack vest/neck collar and fan in costume head</li> <li>- No one should wear the costume for more than 15-20 minutes in 85 degree or higher temperatures</li> <li>- Remove yourself from the activity to a place where you can remove the head, loosen the body suit and cool down</li> <li>- Take turns wearing the costume with others</li> </ul>



<p>2. Popularity</p>	<p>2a. Excited Children 2b. Aggressive Children 2c. Animals/Pets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bobber escort needs to watch for and protect wearer of the costume from potential hazards such children pushing Bobber or pulling tail</li> <li>- If animals/pets when approached appear aggressive then the escort should not allow the wearer of the costume near the animal/pet</li> </ul>
<p>3. Charging and Using Battery</p>	<p>3a. Fumes 3b. Electrical Shock</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Charge battery in well-ventilated area</li> <li>- Do not smoke or cause spark in vicinity of charging battery</li> <li>- Replace defective cords and wires</li> <li>- Do not expose to the rain</li> <li>- Always unplug AC supply cord before connecting or disconnecting the charger from the battery</li> </ul>
<p>4. Water Safety</p>	<p>4a. Drowning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No one should ever enter the water, operate a vehicle, or operate or ride in a boat or any other vessel</li> <li>- The costume life jacket is not a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket and should not be thrown for rescue or worn on or near the water.</li> </ul>

### BOBBER PRE-USE CHECKLIST

The person responsible for Bobber must fill out this form.

INSPECT THE ITEMS LISTED BELOW:

COMPONENTS	Yes	No	Comments
Head (w/ dog tag & tongue)			
Chin strap, buckle and fan in head			
Tail backpack, buckle that attaches to head			
Battery and Power supply charger			
Body suit			
Two (2) Paw Gloves			
Two (2) Paw Shoes			
Bobber Life Jacket			
Cooling Kit (vest, collar and two loads of gel packs)			
Costume Manual and Guidelines Binder			

CONDITION	Yes	No	Comments
Suit and components are clean and free of odors			
Damage to head			
Any tears, rips, or stains			
Zippers and velcro working			
Head fan works			
Head buckle strap working and in good condition			
Power supply working and holds charge			
Tail Backpack straps and buckles ok			
Gel packs in good condition			
Life jacket buckles working and in good condition			
Life jacket straps frayed			
Life jacket Corps logo in good condition			
Tail holds shape when bent up			

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Print Name

Project

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Signature

Date

## BOBBER POST-USE CHECKLIST

The person responsible for Bobber must fill out this form.

### INSPECT THE ITEMS LISTED BELOW

COMPONENTS	Yes	No	Comments
Head (w/ dog tag & tongue)			
Chin strap, buckle and fan in head			
Tail backpack, buckle that attaches to head			
Battery and Power supply charger			
Body suit			
Two (2) Paw Gloves			
Two (2) Paw Shoes			
Bobber Life Jacket			
Cooling Kit (vest, collar and two loads of gel packs)			
Costume Manual and Guidelines Binder			

CONDITION	Yes	No	Comments
Suit and components are clean and free of odors			
Damage to head			
Any tears, rips, or stains			
Zippers and velcro working			
Head fan works			
Head buckle strap working and in good condition			
Power supply working and holds charge			
Tail Backpack straps and buckles ok			
Gel packs in good condition			
Life jacket buckles working and in good condition			
Life jacket straps frayed			
Life jacket Corps logo in good condition			
Tail holds shape when bent up			

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Project

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date