

DISTRESS SIGNALS

- A gun fired at intervals of one minute.
- A continuous sounding of a fog horn.
- Red star shells.
- A Morse code SOS signal (. . . - - - . . .) sent by radiotelegraphy, flashing light, or other means.
- Flying international code flags of "N" and "C" (November (checkered) and Charlie (stripes) in the phonetic alphabet)
- A black square and ball on an orange background.
- Flames on the vessel (as from burning tar or oil in a barrel)
- A rocket parachute flare or a hand flare showing a red light.
- A smoke signal giving off orange-colored smoke.
- Slowly and repeatedly raising and lowering your arms outstretched to each side.
- An automatic radiotelephone alarm signal.
- Signals sent by emergency position-indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs)
- Flashing mirror.
- Any color dye marker.
- "Mayday" by radio.

DISTRESS NOTES

Use a distress signal only when there is someone to see it.

Aerial Flares - use in two's - many of them are short and someone may only see part of the signal and not recognize the signal. A second aerial flare sent up just after the first one will eliminate any question.

SOLAS grade flares burn longer and/or brighter than Coast Guard approved flares. SOLAS flares are also Coast Guard approved.

Hand held flares produce hot slag or ash when burning that can start a boat on fire if allowed to drop on the deck. Hand held flares should be held over the edge of the boat and down wind of the person using so they are not injured or the boat damaged.

Smoke flares are not very effective on windy days and are for daytime use only.

Some smoke flares are designed to float and be placed in the water when operating. Some smoke flares are hand held.

Keep flares dry. Store in an airtight container and keep in a dry place.

A white flare can be used to get the attention of another ship to help avoid collision.

Most meteor aerial flares only last about 10 seconds. Most parachute flares last about 45 seconds.

The current service life of a Pyrotechnic device is 42 months from date of manufacture. Look at the expiration date when buying devices and buy ones with as long of shelf life as possible.

When Pyrotechnic devices are past the expiration date they may be saved on the boat but not counted toward the legal requirements. Many devices will work past the expiration date so expired flares can help to give additional signal devices.

Never use road flares on a boat. They can easily light the boat on fire. Marine flares are designed to reduce the risk of fire but they must still be used with care.

It is illegal to fire a Pyrotechnic device on Federal navigable water unless an emergency exists. There are large fines and you can be required to pay for the cost of a false distress signal.