

US COAST GUARD VISUAL DISTRESS SIGNAL REQUIREMENTS

The USCG requires 3 visual distress signals if approved for both day and night use. Otherwise, three for day use and three for night use are required. Marine flares must not be expired and stowed accessibly.

According to the CA Coastal Commission, all boaters operating on coastal waters, the Great Lakes, territorial seas, and waters directly connected to them (up to the point where the body of water is less than two miles wide) must meet the USCG requirements. Exceptions are:

- Recreational boats less than 16 feet in length
- Open sailboats less than 26 feet in length and not equipped with propulsion machinery, and
- Manually propelled boats

These vessels are only required to carry nighttime signals when operating from sunset to sunrise.

Failure to comply to these requirements could result in a \$1,100 fine. The USGC performs random inspections on boaters.



One-Color
SOS eVDS



Two-Color
SOS eVDS



Distress Flag



Handheld
Red Flare



Floating Orange
Smoke Flare

BOAT SAFETY CHECKLIST

Use this list and check your State requirements for local laws to be safe on the water. Call your local Power Squadron or Coast Guard Auxiliary for a Vessel Safety Check. This list is not exhaustive. Always check USCG regulations before boating.



Coast Guard Compliant Marine Distress Signal

All vessels are required to carry day/night time approved devices. Review proper use and storage.



Personal Flotation Devices

Must carry one USCG-approved life jacket per person aboard. Check each one for accessibility, sizing and whistles. Children under 13 must always wear life jacket while aboard. All vessels over 16' required to have one throwable flotation device.



Sound Signaling Devices

A sound signaling device is required aboard all boats. To be used in fog, signaling bridges and in emergencies.



First Aid Kit

Purchase a kit that will fit your needs in a minor emergency.



Anchor with Anchor Line

Check and replace any worn lines. Should be at least 5 – 7 times the water depth.



Fire Extinguisher

Check USCG requirements for size and number. Must be USCG approved and marine specific. Charge and store properly.



recyclemore

WEST CONTRA COSTA INTEGRATED
WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

GUIDE TO MARINE FLARE MANAGEMENT IN CALIFORNIA



CPSC
California Product
Stewardship Council

PROPER DISPOSAL OF MARINE FLARES

Pyrotechnic marine flares contain toxic metals and pollutants, such as perchlorate.

Pyrotechnic devices expire 42 months after manufacturing and need to be disposed of properly to avoid danger to persons and environment. Check printed expiration dates and contact the manufacturer for advice on proper disposal of expired flares and flares that will expire in the upcoming boating season. Never throw expired devices overboard or in household trash.

Non-pyrotechnic (electronic) devices, such as the approved eVSDS SOS devices from Sirius Signal, never expires and can last the lifetime of your boat. Annually check and dispose of dead batteries.

There are currently no safe disposal options near West Contra Costa County. Watch for temporary collection events and contact local policy makers to ask for a solution.



WARNING: It is illegal to use flare launchers as weapons or for any use other than emergency distress signaling. User may be subject to civil or criminal action under State Firearm Laws.



USCG-APPROVED NON-PYROTECHNIC ELECTRONIC VISUAL DISTRESS SIGNALS

Residents can use a non-pyrotechnic electronic distress signal device (eVSDS) with an orange flag for their safety and maximum visibility in an emergency situation. Note that eVSDSDs are not USCG compliant for carriage on commercial vessels.

FEATURING

SIRIUS SIGNAL™ *for life*



White
161.013
SOS eVDS White
Required to Run: 6 hrs (nighttime only)



Red-Orange/Cyan
RTCM 13200.0
SOS eVSDS R-O/C
Required to Run: 2 hrs (nighttime only)



Pyrotechnic Marine Flares are considered explosive hazardous waste and require special disposal.

Consider switching to reusable electronic devices.