

NEVER allow children access to distress flares

NEVER use a distress flare unless there is grave and imminent danger to life or a vessel

NEVER point a distress flare at someone

NEVER use a hand flare near a fuel tank

ALWAYS wear protective gloves to protect your hands

ALWAYS read the instructions printed on the flare before use

ALWAYS hold a hand flare downwind, over the side of the boat, at arm's length and above your eyelevel to prevent burning debris being blown back at you or into the boat

Once a distress flare has been used drop the hot empty case overboard, not in the boat!

How to Use Hand Flares

The red hand flares are best used at night, or in bad visibility. They burn for 60 seconds and are extremely visible in poor light conditions.

The orange hand smoke flares are best used during daylight hours, especially on bright sunny days. The dense cloud of orange smoke produced by a smoke flare is unmistakable at sea and in light wind conditions should remain visible for some minutes after the flare has gone out.

If you cannot see anyone, then realistically no-one can see you – so don't waste them! Wait until another vessel, or someone on land comes into view. In a panic it is easy to fire them all off in a hurry, so try to be disciplined.

Set one flare off, let it burn and then wait at least 3 minutes to see if anyone stops and looks, or if a vessel changes course toward you.

If no-one appears to have seen you but vessels or people on land are still within view, then set off a second flare. As soon as someone on land waves or acknowledges your signal, or when a vessel appears to head in your direction, set off another distress flare to confirm to the person or the vessel that you are in genuine distress.