

*Peter Caten*



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## Peter Caten: Safety Topic for you! Flares & Distress Signals, from Boats US

1 message

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### Flares and Distress Signals

#### Flares and Distress Signals

Learn when and how to use Visual distress signals. VDS are an important part of your boat's safety equipment.

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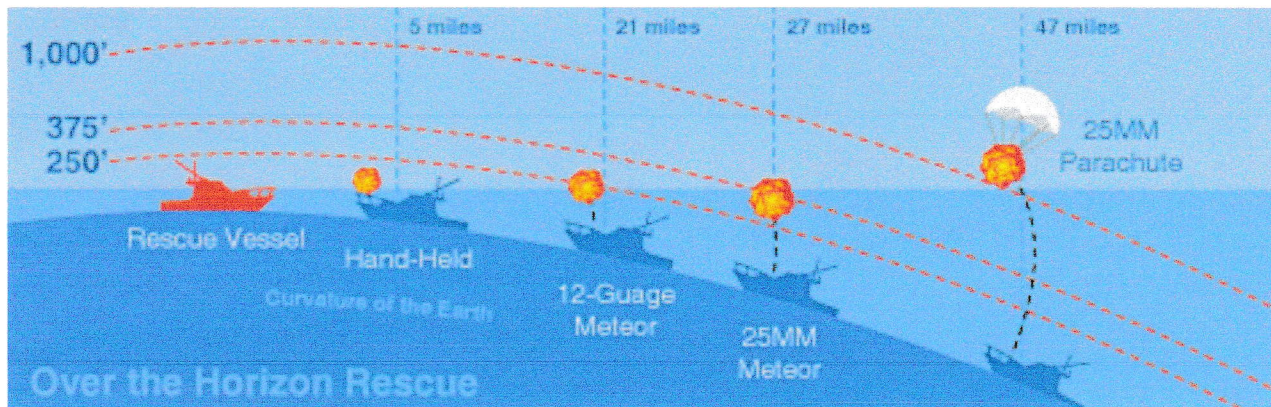
### Flares and Distress Signals

Visual distress signals (V.D.S.) are part of your boat's safety equipment. Check them before you leave harbor for condition and if they have an expiration date, be sure they are current.

#### When and How to Use

Their intended purpose is to summon help should the need arise and should be displayed only when immediate or potential danger exists. Visual distress signals can only be effective when someone is in a position to see them. Therefore, when employing pyrotechnic devices, do so only when you see or hear a boat or airplane or you are

reasonably sure that someone on shore is in position to see your signal and take action. Good judgment is an essential part of successful use of visual distress signals.



### Examples of Pyrotechnic and Non-Pyrotechnic Devices

- Red Hand-held Flare (day and night)
- Parachute Flare (day and night)
- Red Meteor (day and night)
- Orange Smoke Signal (hand-held/day only)
- Floating Orange Smoke Signal (day only)
- Orange Signal Flag (day only)
- Electric Distress Light (night only)

Read More About This Topic

[Page 2: Requirements: Flares and Distress Signals](#)

[Page 3: Flares: What's Right for You?](#)

[Foundation Findings: Pyrotechnic Visual Distress Signals](#)

Visual distress signals, especially pyrotechnic devices, are typically not deployed just to practice. In fact, it's against the law. That's why many people are not familiar with how to safely use and care for these devices. To show you how to use visual distress signals as designed and to use them safely, watch the videos above.



### What if you see a Visual Distress Signal given off by another vessel?

The unwritten law of the sea requires that a mariner come to the aid of a mariner in distress. Therefore, should you see a distress signal, immediate and positive action should be taken. Notify the nearest Coast Guard station or State authority by radio. Channel 9 on CB and Channel 16 on VHF marine radio (156.8 MHz) are recognized distress channels. If you can assist the stricken vessel without endangering yourself, you should. The Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971 contains a "Good Samaritan" clause stating: "Any person ....who gratuitously and in good faith renders assistance at the scene of a vessel collision, accident, or other casualty without objection of any person assisted, shall not be held liable for any act or omission in providing or arranging salvage, towage, medical treatment, or other assistance where the assisting person acts as an ordinary, reasonably prudent man or woman would have acted under the same or similar circumstances."