

The Facts on Flares

Sirius Signal CEO Anthony Covelli educates boaters on the benefits of the new SOS signal device.



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LB: What are the major drawbacks of traditional pyrotechnic flares?

Covelli: The most widely available pyrotechnic flare lasts a mere three minutes and burns at more than 2,000 degrees. They have a relatively short shelf life before becoming out-of-date and useless. This means that boaters have to remember to purchase new ones, or face a fine when the boat is inspected. And since they have to be bought so frequently, the old ones obviously must be thrown away.

LB: We understand that very few people dispose of pyrotechnic flares properly. What is the environmental impact of improperly disposed flares?

Covelli: The effect on the environment is disastrous because legal disposal is nearly impossible and very costly. Unused flares contaminate ground water with a toxic chemical called perchlorate. In 2005, the state of Rhode Island did a study examining perchlorate levels in a state reservoir and discovered that one unburned flare could contaminate 240,000 gallons of water.

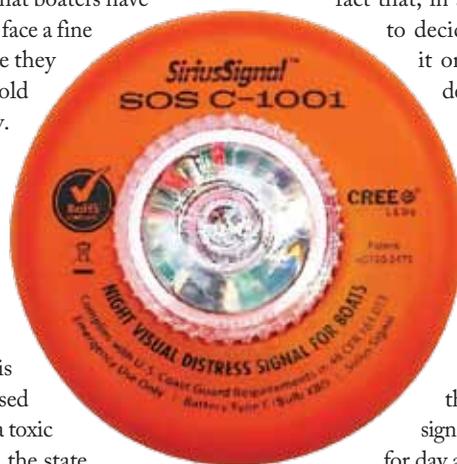
LB: What are the problems associated with flare guns?

Covelli: Pyrotechnic emergency flare guns can be extremely dangerous in the wrong hands. Patented in 1859, 20 years before Edison's invention of the light bulb, the original flare gun has changed little during its vast history, remaining as much a safety hazard today as it was more than 150 years ago. Strangely, for an item meant to save lives, flare guns have been responsible for numerous deaths, both intentional and accidental. Pyrotechnic visual distress signals of all types — like traditional firearms — have the ability to cause fatal injuries and require training for proper use. In addition, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) often has to respond to false alarms caused by the misuse of pyrotechnic flares.

LB: It seems the Sirius' electric visual distress signal device (eVDS) is a practical and superior alternative to a pyrotechnic flare. How does it work?

Covelli: The battery-operated, buoyant and lightweight LED SOS Distress Light is easy to use. The simple on/

off unit floats and can be tethered, hand-held, or, ideally, hoisted to the top of a mast or antenna. As opposed to a traditional flare that must be held over the side of the boat (so as not to cause damage), the LED can be safely used onboard. The biggest advantage of an eVDS is the fact that, in a stressful situation, you don't have to decide when to use it — you just turn it on. With pyrotechnics, you have to determine the best time to strike or fire them in hopes that someone will see you during the very short time they burn.



LB: Does the LED signal meet USCG regulations?

Covelli: Yes. It complies with all requirements for night visual distress signals (VDS). When combined with the included orange daytime distress signal flag, it meets all USCG requirements for day and night VDS.

LB: How long does the LED battery last while in storage?

Covelli: The batteries are rated for a shelf life of 10 years, but for ultimate safety we suggest changing them at the beginning of every boating season. Buying three "C" cell batteries is considered very inexpensive insurance.

LB: How far can they be seen?

Covelli: Of course visibility is determined by several factors, such as atmospheric conditions and height off the water. Generally, the Sirius Signal eVDS SOS signal is visible up to 10 nautical miles.

LB: How long do they last in operation?

Covelli: At peak intensity, our device will last for six hours with a total illumination period of up to 60 hours.

LB: How much do they cost and where can I order mine?

Covelli: The cost of the Sirius Signal SOS Distress Light unit, with flag and batteries, is \$99.95. Complete purchasing information can be found at SIRIUSSIGNAL.COM. ★



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