

# The Future of Marine Safety and Sustainability with Flare Collection Events

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In an era where sustainability is more crucial than ever, California is leading the way in finding eco-friendly solutions for marine safety. This fall, multiple coastal jurisdictions across California are partnering with state organizations to host expired marine flare collection events. These events aim to tackle one of the pressing environmental issues faced by boaters—proper disposal of single-use pyrotechnic marine flares.

## The Challenge of Disposing Pyrotechnic Flares

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Pyrotechnic marine flares, essential for every boater's safety kit, unfortunately pose significant environmental challenges. Classified as hazardous waste due to their toxic chemicals, including perchlorate, these flares require careful handling and disposal. Yet, with limited disposal facilities in the country, the cost of safe disposal ranges from \$10 to \$50 per flare, a burden often leading to improper disposal methods. Consequently, many end up in household trash or, worse, thrown into our waterways, contaminating environments and endangering human health.

## Paving the Way for Future Marine Safety Legislation

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Although Governor Gavin Newsom vetoed SB1066, the Marine Flare Manufacturer Responsibility Act, it represented a crucial initial step in tackling the pressing issue of safely disposing of expired marine flares. The bill highlighted the environmental hazards associated with hazardous pyrotechnic flares and paved the way for future legislative initiatives. With robust support from environmental advocates and lawmakers, a solid foundation has been established for a more comprehensive plan, which can be developed in partnership with the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). Looking ahead, stakeholders remain optimistic about forthcoming legislation that will better protect both boaters and the environment while providing effective oversight and enforcement.

## Upcoming Flare Collection Events

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Recognizing the current lack of ongoing disposal programs, California's Coastal Commission, along with California Coastal Commission, CalRecycle, and California State Parks, is organizing a series of collection events to provide temporary relief. These events will not only facilitate the safe disposal of expired flares but also educate participants about the advantages of reusable electronic distress signals, or eVDSDs, as an alternative.

## 2024 Event Details:

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### Southern California

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- **Port of San Diego** – Saturday, October 26, from 8 AM to 12 PM at 2210 Shelter Island Dr, San Diego, CA 92106
- **Port of Los Angeles** – Saturday, October 26, from 10 AM to 2 PM at Cabrillo Way Marina, 2293 Miner St, San Pedro, CA 90731
- **City of Morro Bay** – Sunday, October 27, from 8 AM to 12 PM at 1196 Front St, Morro Bay, CA 93442

### Northern California

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- **West Contra Costa County** – October 16 to November 2, 2024, Wednesday to Saturday, 9 AM to 4 PM, at 101 Pittsburg Avenue, Richmond, CA 94801
- **Alameda County** – Sunday, November 3, 2024, By Appointment ONLY (details at StopWaste)
- **Marin County** – Sunday, November 3, 2024, from 8 AM to 12 PM at Clipper Yacht Harbor, 310 Harbor Dr, Sausalito, CA 94965
- **Del Norte County** – Saturday, November 2, 2024, from 10 AM to 2 PM at 1700 State Street, Crescent City, CA 95531

These events are open to residents and recreational boaters who berth their vessels in designated counties. They provide a unique opportunity to dispose of flares safely and learn more about sustainable marine practices.

## The Future with Electronic Visual Distress Signals

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Alongside collection efforts, there's a growing movement towards adopting electronic Visual Distress Signal Devices (eVDSDs). These devices, like those offered by Sirius Signal, provide a reusable, environmentally friendly alternative to traditional pyrotechnic flares. Approved by the U.S. Coast Guard, eVDSDs are not only safe but also eliminate the disposal issues associated with single-use flares.

Event participants have the opportunity to receive a free eVDSD from Sirius Signal and a CA Boaters Kit while supplies last, offering an incentive to make the switch to a more sustainable option. For those unable to attend an event, discounts on eVDSDs are available.

## Empowering Boaters to Protect Our Waters

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Flare collection events serve as a crucial step towards more sustainable boating practices, mitigating the environmental impact of pyrotechnic flares while promoting safer, reusable alternatives. By supporting these events and considering the benefits of new legislation,

boaters and environmentalists alike can play a pivotal role in safeguarding our waters and communities.