

Flares are NOT toys: Oregon Coast Guard warns public of consequences of illegal flare lighting

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Flares are NOT toys: Oregon Coast Guard warns public of consequences of illegal flare lighting

WARRENTON, Ore. -- The Coast Guard is reminding the public of the consequences of illegal flare lighting after an aircrew witnessed the firing of multiple flares near Cannon Beach, Oregon, early Monday morning.

A Sector Columbia River aircrew aboard an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter responded to a report of flare sightings at approximately 2:00 a.m. this morning, witnessing individuals firing dozens of flares from shore and then fleeing into the forest.

“It is against the law to fire distress flares unless in an emergency situation,” said John Bennett, operations unit member at Coast Guard Sector Columbia River. “Flares signal that somebody is in immediate danger and needs assistance. False activation can tie up emergency resources and delay the response to genuine emergency calls.”

While the Coast Guard encourages the public to report potential sightings of distress, please remember that there are severe penalties for the misuse of flares including the cost of the response.

Additionally, responding to false flare reports increases the risk of the emergency personnel and could potentially result in the loss of life due to the misuse of visual distress signals.

If you spot a flare, please take these steps to report the incident to local emergency responders.

The Coast Guard strongly encourages mariners to carry visual distress signals aboard their vessels as they could potentially save lives and to not be afraid to use those signals in the event of a true emergency situation.

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