

Upcoming Marine Flare Collection Events

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Together, CalRecycle, California State Parks and Coastal Commission's California Boating Clean and Green Program have partnered with Alameda County, Delta Diablo, Del Norte County, Contra Costa County, Marin County, the City of Oceanside, the Port of LA, and the California Product Stewardship Council to host a marine flare collection event where boaters can bring expired flares and learn about marine flare management safety, including the advantages of reusable distress signals like electronic visual distress signal device (eVDSD), that better protect California communities and the environment.

Residents and boaters berthing their boats in the above locations can take expired marine flares to their county's designated marine flare collection events this fall. Only expired marine flares from residents and boaters berthing their boats in the covered areas will be accepted. No marine flares from commercial craft, an organization, or other household hazardous waste (HHW) will be accepted during the special event. Proof of residence or eligibility is required (i.e., license, registration, or slip fee).

Southern California

- City of Oceanside: Saturday, Sept. 9, from 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. at 1850 Harbor Dr N, Oceanside, CA 92054
- Port of LA: Saturday, Sept. 9 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at Cabrillo Way Marina – 2293 Miner St, San Pedro, CA 90731

Northern California

- East Contra Costa County: Aug. 17 – Sept. 16, during business hours at 2550 Pittsburg-Antioch Hwy, Pittsburg, CA 94565
- West Contra Costa County: Aug. 16 – Sept. 16, during business hours at 101 Pittsburg Avenue, Richmond, CA 94801
- Del Norte County: Saturday, Sept. 16, from 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. at 1700 State Street, Crescent City, CA 95531. **Open to residents of Humboldt County*
- Marin County: Sunday, Sept. 17, from 8 a.m. -12 p.m. at Clipper Yacht Harbor – 310 Harbor Drive, Sausalito, CA 94965
- Alameda County: Sunday, Sept. 17, by appointment only. Sign up for an appointment: www.stopwaste.org/marineflares

The United States Coast Guard requires boaters to carry several unexpired visual distress signals on board, day and night. Pyrotechnic marine flares are the most common distress signals found onboard. Still, they are explosive and contain hazardous waste and toxic chemicals, like perchlorate, that are harmful to humans and the environment. Marine flares are single-use only, expire 36-42 months after manufacture, and can also fail to launch.

Managing single-use pyrotechnic marine flares is essential for safety and environmental reasons. Boaters should never throw flares overboard or in their household trash. However, California resident boaters do not have access to routine expired marine flare disposal programs, and according to the California Expired Marine Flare Working Group, recreational vessels generate about 174,000 pyrotechnic marine flares yearly, an estimation from 2012.

In the absence of safe disposal options locally, the partners encourage resident boaters to consider switching to eVDSDs as a reusable distress signal alternative to the single-use pyrotechnic marine flare. They are a one-time fee, last up to ten years, and have different colored light patterns that stand out against bright, chaotic cityscapes.

For more information about expired marine flares and the benefits of using electronic distress signals, visit dbw.parks.ca.gov/marineflares.