



Distress Flares

A guide to the use of flares

Introduction

This presentation takes you through the main types of distress flare and when and how to use them



Distress Flares

Be sure to carry sufficient distress flares for your cruising area



They should be carefully stowed in a tough waterproof container and stored in a place where you can access them easily



Ensure your flares are in date

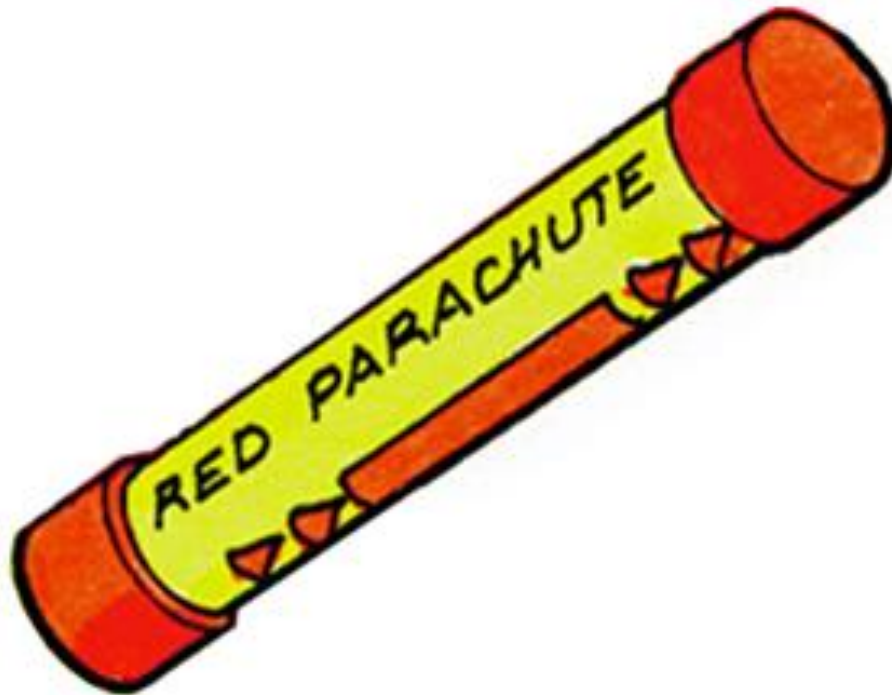
Red Hand-held Flares

Red hand-held flares are recommended to be used day or night, within three miles of a rescuer



Red Parachute Flares

Red parachute rockets are useful for attracting attention from a greater distance, day or night



Orange Smoke Flares

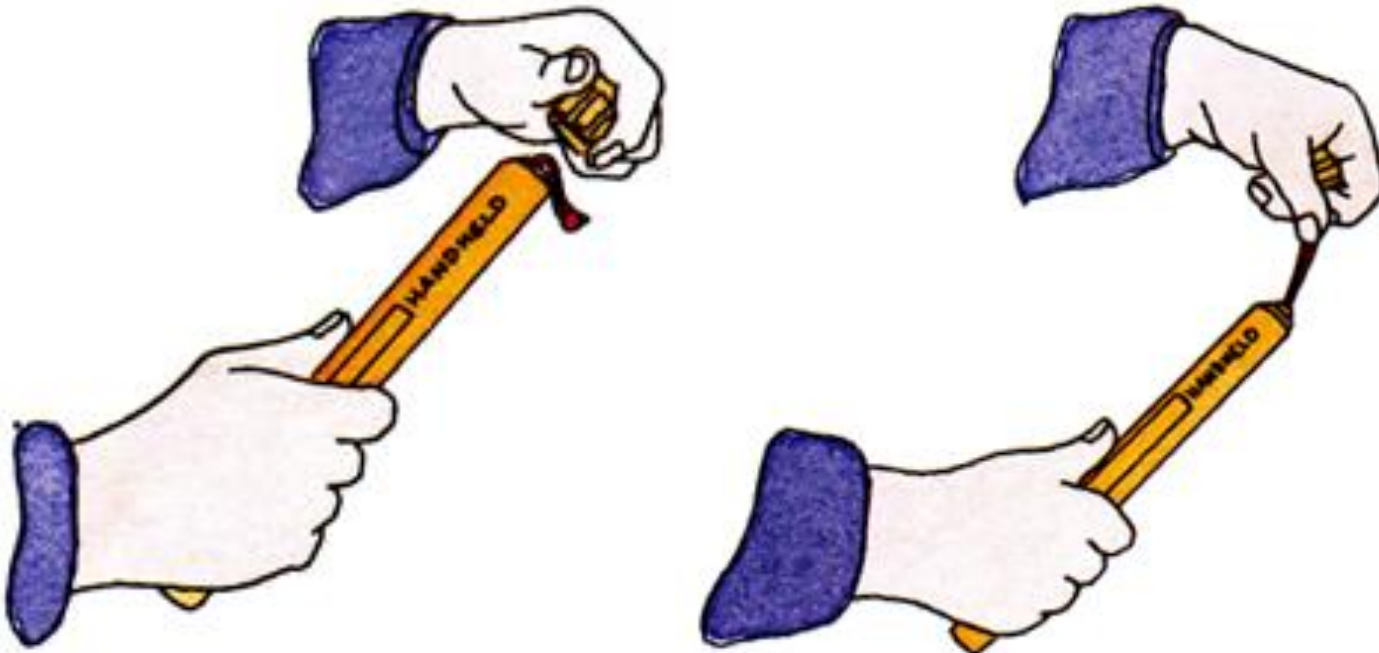
Buoyant orange smoke should be used during daytime only



They are particularly useful when airborne rescue services are in the vicinity

Using Flares

Most brands of flare operate differently



Read the instructions before you need to use them
in an emergency

Using Flares

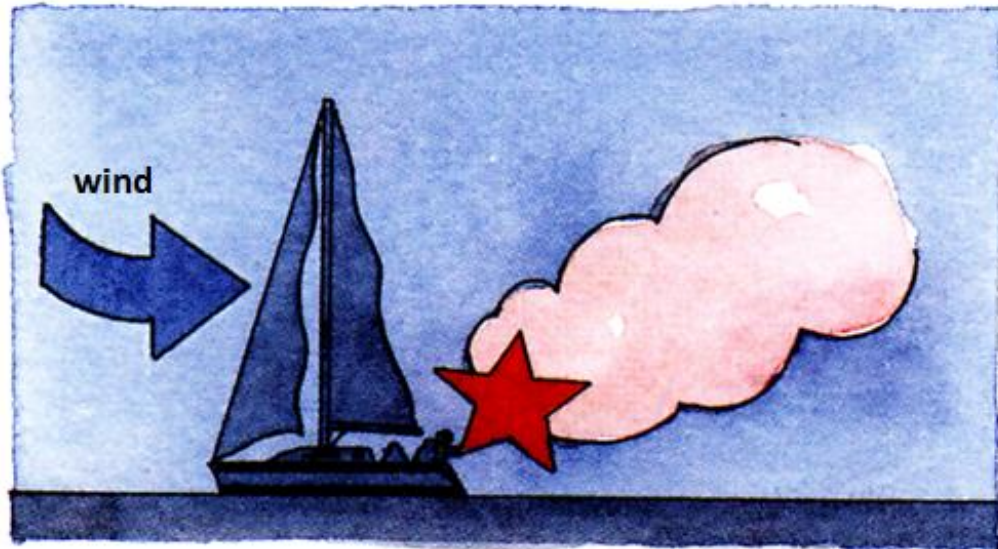
Take care to hold the flare by its handle.....



.....as the metal casing of hand-held flares becomes very hot

Red Hand-held Flares

Hold a hand-held flare horizontally downwind

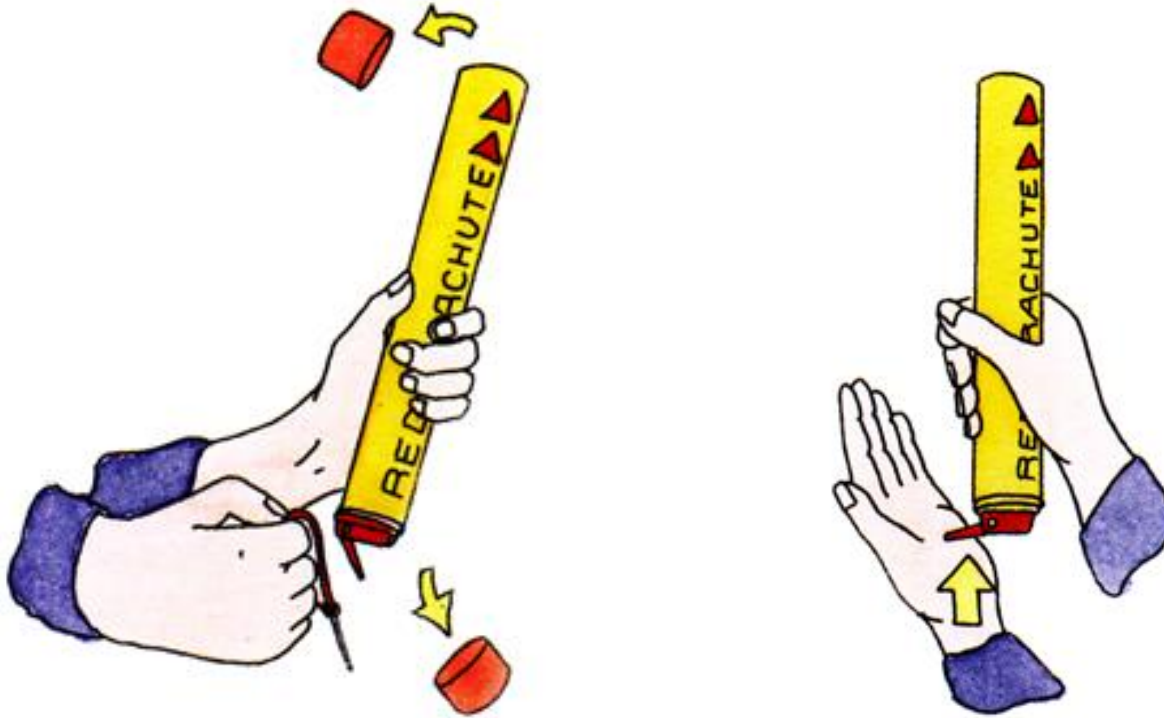


This will help protect your hand and allow the smoke to blow away from the vessel

It is best to wear gloves

Red Parachute Flares

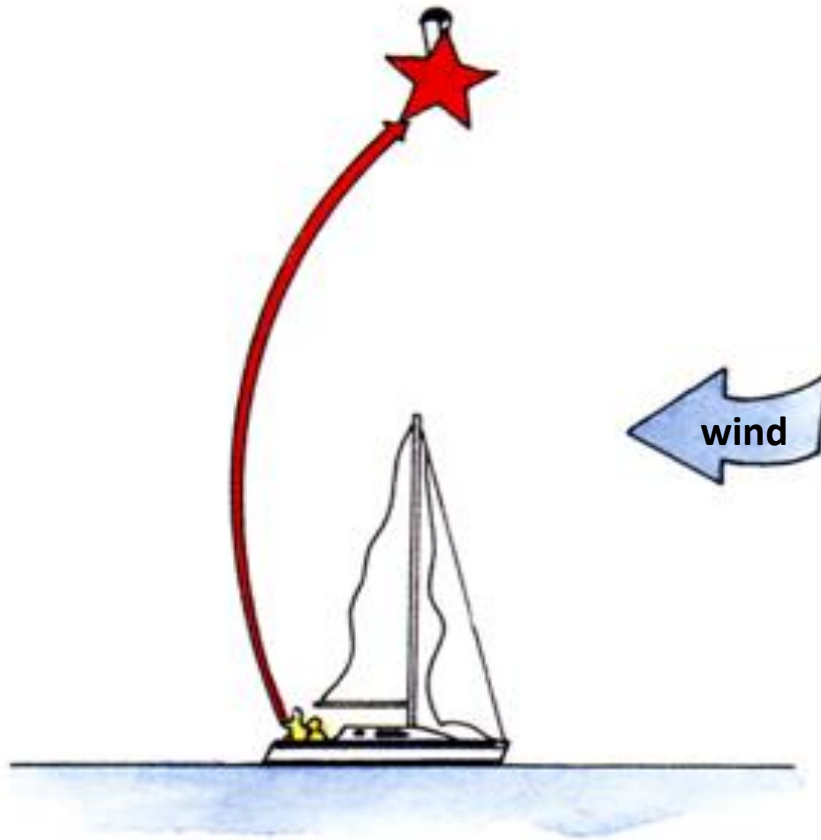
Parachute rockets can be seen from a greater distance than hand-held flares



They should be fired in pairs to give rescuers a better chance of taking a bearing

Red Parachute Flares

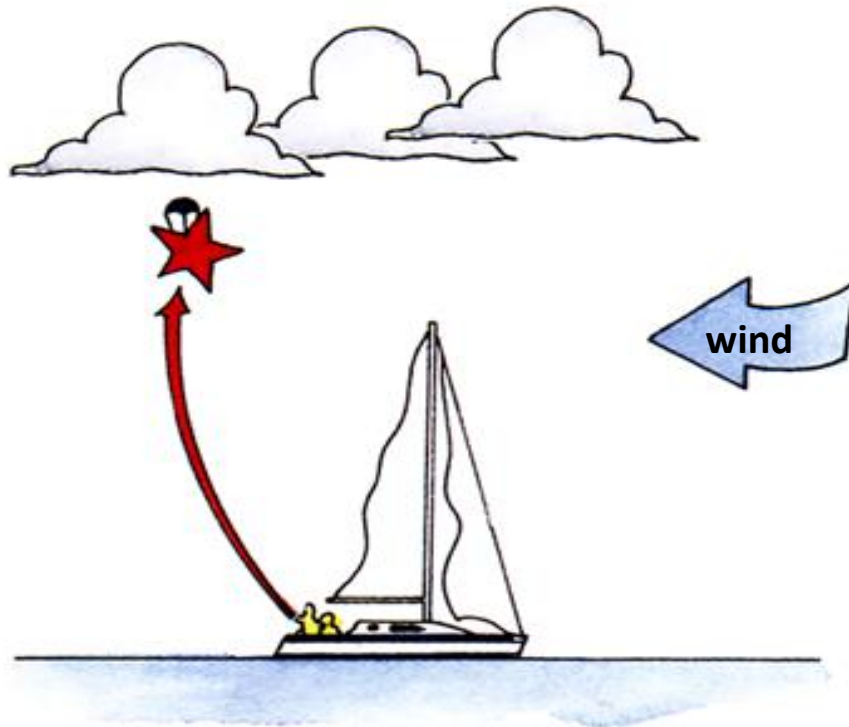
Fire the rocket slightly downwind



To attain maximum height

Red Parachute Flares

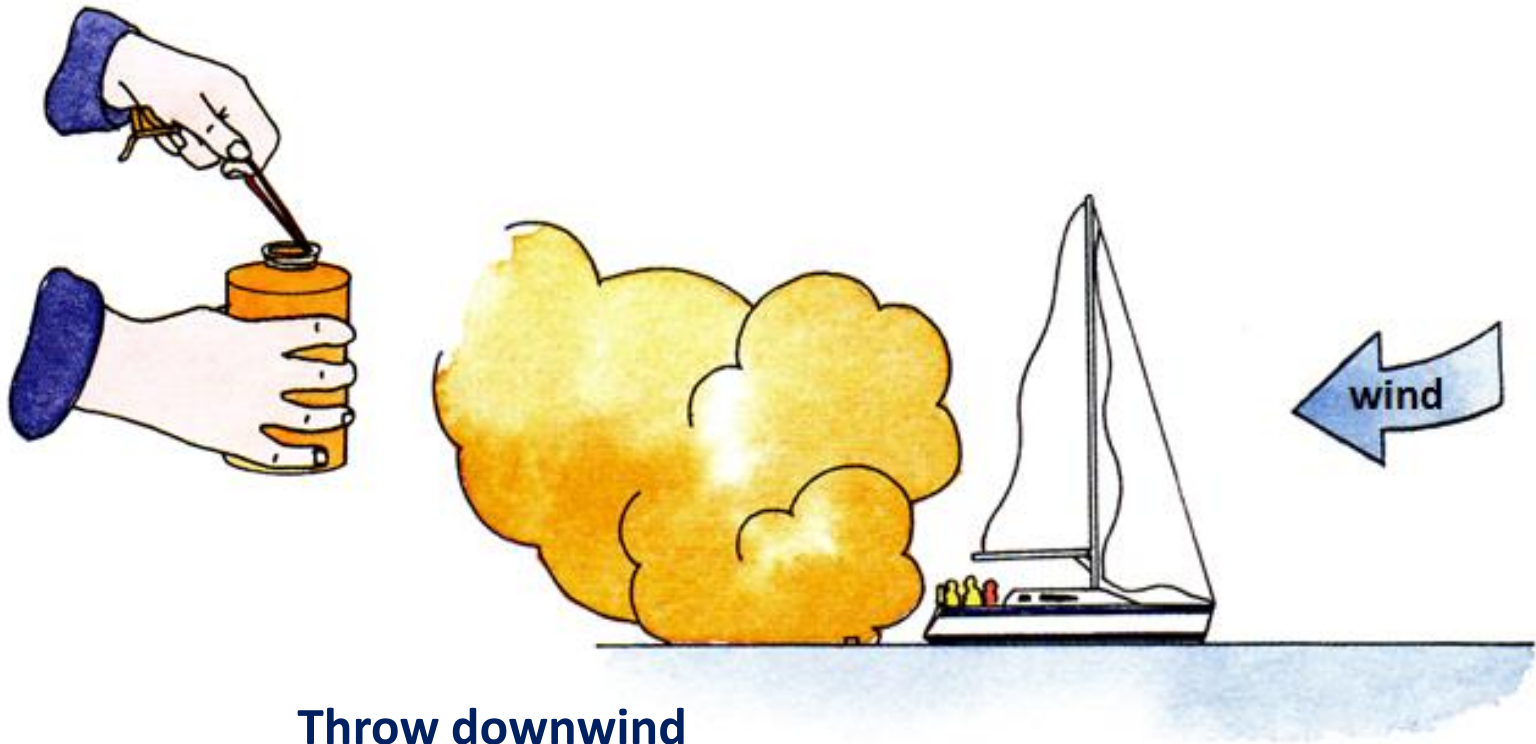
Under cloudy conditions the downwind firing angle should be greater



Enabling the flare to deploy under the cloud

Buoyant Orange Smoke Flares

Orange smoke is for daylight use only and are best used when you can see rescuers searching for you

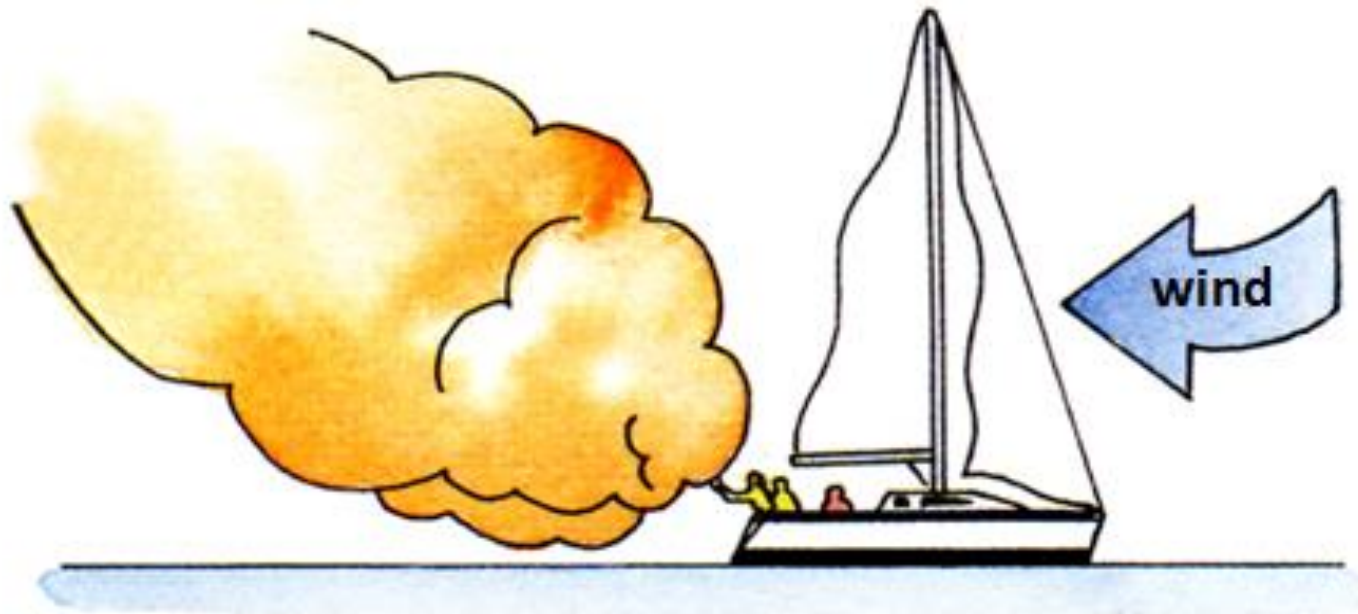


Throw downwind

Cloud lasts three or four minutes

Orange Hand-held Smoke Flares

Again a daytime use flare - hand-held smoke cloud lasts approximately one minute



Summary

Equip your yacht with the number and type of flares for your cruising needs:

- Day cruising in sheltered waters
- Coastal cruising
- Offshore cruising and ocean racing

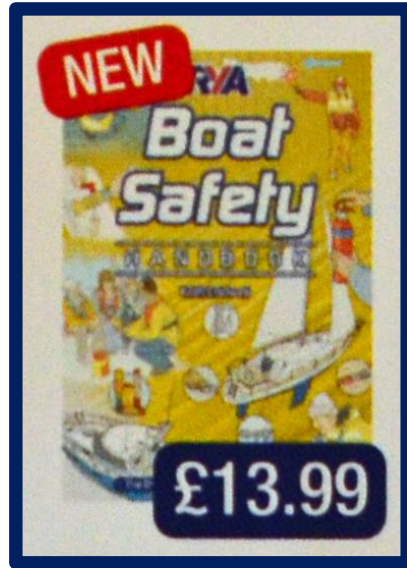
Keep flares stored in a watertight secure container in a position you can easily access them

Ensure your flares are in date

There is no standard firing mechanism, therefore find out how your flares are operated

Never set off out of date flares at home – always dispose of them responsibly (ie, not on bonfire night)

Further Reading



We highly recommend
RYA Boat Safety Handbook (G103)
and
RYA Sea Survival Handbook (G43)

You can buy copies of these book by visiting our on-line shop at
www.penguinsailing.com