

For chemical-type devices, take them out of their bracket and shake them vigorously in the upside down position (about once a month) to prevent the extinguishing agent from caking and hardening at the bottom.

Reacting to a fire

If a small fire erupts, activate a fire extinguisher and direct it at the base of the flames. Sweep the discharge nozzle from side to side and continue doing this for a few seconds after the flames are completely extinguished. Otherwise, the fire may re-ignite and you may not have enough extinguishing agent left to put it out again.

If your boat is in motion when a fire starts, position it so the fire is downwind from you and stop the engine if it is safe to do so under the weather conditions. Make sure everyone is wearing a flotation device, use extinguishers to control the fire and, if safe to do so, shut-off the fuel source.

The Small Vessel Regulations do not address automatic extinguishing systems some pleasure craft may carry. Even if your pleasure craft has this type of system it must carry the portable extinguishers indicated in the Minimum Required Equipment section. More information on the care and maintenance of fire extinguishers is available from ULC or the manufacturer.



Distress equipment

Watertight flashlights

Almost every pleasure craft requires a watertight flashlight or flares. In the event of an electrical failure, a watertight flashlight may be your only means of signalling for help.



Distress flares

Use flares only in times of real distress. Before purchasing, make sure they are approved by Transport Canada. There are four types of approved pyrotechnics: A, B, C and D.

Aerial flares should be fired at an angle into the wind. With a high wind velocity, lower the angle to a maximum of 45 degrees. Pyrotechnics are valid only for four years from the date of manufacture, stamped on each flare. To dispose of your outdated flares, seek advice from your local fire department, law enforcement agency or Transport Canada Centre.

Store flares vertically in a cool, dry location (such as a watertight container) to help them retain their efficiency, but keep them accessible in case of an emergency.

Pleasure craft greater than 6 m (19'8") in length and pleasure craft up to 12 m (39'4") in length are exempt from carrying pyrotechnic distress signals if:

- Operating in a river, canal or lake in which it can at no time be more than one nautical mile (1.852 km) from shore
- Engaged in an official competition or in final preparation for an official competition and have no sleeping arrangements



Type A: Parachute

- Single red star
- When launched, reaches height of 300 m (984') and with the aid of parachute, comes down slowly
- Easily observed from the surface or air
- Burns for at least 40 seconds



Type B: Multi-star

- Two or more red stars
- When launched, reach a height of 100 m (328') and burn for four or five seconds each
- Easily observed from the surface or air

Some Type B flares project only one star at a time. When using this single star type, two flares must be fired within 15 seconds of each other. You will need double the number of cartridges to meet the requirements of the regulations.



Type C: Hand-held

- Red flame torch held in your hand
- Limited surface visibility
- Best for pinpointing location during an air search
- Burns for at least one minute

Avoid looking directly at the flare while it is burning. Ignite the flare while holding it clear of the boat and down wind.



Type D: Smoke (buoyant or hand-held)

- Produces a dense orange smoke for three minutes
- Used only as a day signal
- Some types are made especially for pleasure craft use that last one minute and come in a package of three

Position your smoke flare down wind and follow the directions carefully.

Navigation equipment

Sound-signalling devices

Pleasure craft less than 12 m (39'4") in length need a sound-signalling device if they are not fitted with a sound-signalling appliance. The sound-signalling device can be a pealess whistle, compressed gas horn or an electric horn.



Sound-signalling appliances

Pleasure craft 12 m (39'4") or greater in length must have a fitted whistle. Check the Collision Regulations for the technical criteria the whistle must meet.

Navigation lights

If you operate your boat at night or in restricted visibility, it needs navigation lights. If your pleasure craft has navigation lights, they must work and be fitted in accordance with the Collision Regulations (for placement options, see the silhouettes in the Minimum Required Equipment section).

Radar reflectors

Vessels less than 20 m (65'7") in length or that are constructed primarily of non-metallic materials must have radar reflectors, unless they are not essential to the safety of the vessel, or the small size of the vessel or its operation away from radar navigation makes compliance impractical. If properly positioned, they help larger, less manoeuvrable vessels detect your presence on their radar screens. They should be

located above all superstructures and at least 4 m (13'1") above the water (if possible).

Towing

Tugs may be towing barges or other vessels on a long tow-line astern. Often, the length of the tow is so great the tow-line hangs below the surface of the water and is nearly invisible. If a small craft were to strike the submerged tow-line, it could capsize and be run down by the barge.

Never pass between a tug and its tow and be alert for special lights displayed by vessels towing barges, other vessels or objects. The towing vessel is usually more visible than its tow. The tow's navigation lights do not include masthead lights and are often much dimmer than those of the towing vessel.

