



VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE WHITSUNDAY

Module : SAFE USE OF FLARES
Type: SOP
Version: 1

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP) SAFE USE OF FLARES

1. Introduction

This SOP describes the procedures for safe use of Distress Flares on VMR1. It is the responsibility of every crew member to follow this procedure.

The use of distress flares when not in distress is an offence and is subject to hefty fines and or imprisonment.

Flares are explosives devices and as such have the potential to cause injury if handled incorrectly.

The distress flares on VMR1 are located in the safety Cell on the flybridge and in the tender.

2. Reference

VMR Training – Risk Assessment 25 July 2017.

3. Detailed Procedures

Considerations prior to the firing of flares;

Carefully read the manufacturer's instructions located on the side of the flare.

Flares shall only be fired on the authority of the skipper responsible for the safety of the vessel and crew.

If the skipper on board is injured and unable to direct the use of the flares then the responsibility falls on the next highest ranking crew member on board.

Consideration shall be given to the following;

The chances of the flare being seen by persons on land or on another vessel.

The number of flares carried on board.

Ensure that the flares have not exceeded its expiry date.
Flares can become unreliable if past their manufacturer's expiry date and they should be promptly replaced and disposed of in a responsible manner.

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The Firing of flares

Do not remove the cap and or safety pin until ready to fire. Once removed the cap or safety pin shall be placed in a safe place until the flare has been fired. If the flare is not fired then the cap or safety pin can be replaced and the flare stowed.

Once the cap or safety pin has been removed the flare shall be pointed skywards and away from the vessel.

Warn the crew that a flare is to be fired and assess the direction of the wind so the crew are not affected by the fumes/smoke from the flare.

No person shall be in front of the person firing the flare in case sparks or a fragment of the flare flies out.

Ensure that the flare is held securely and correctly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Action to be taken when flare misfires

If there is a misfire count to ten before lowering a flare.

The word MISFIRE shall be spoken clearly to warn the crew.
Never point a misfired flare back into the vessel, if it was to fire it may seriously injure one of the crew or damage the vessel.

Never look down the cylinder of a misfired flare.

Should it fire serious injury or death may result.

Unless a container is available into which the misfired flare can be placed to protect the crew and the vessel in the event that it does fire, the flare will need to be placed in the water with the firing end pointing away from the vessel. Never throw a misfired flare into the water, if it was to fire as it spins through the air it may hit the crew or the vessel.

4. Summary

If we all follow these guidelines we will be less likely to have problems/injuries when using flares.

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