



**U.S. Department of Homeland Security**  
**United States Coast Guard Auxiliary**



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Monday, July 15, 2024


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District 5SR

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## Disposal of Flares / Pyrotechnics

### Good News for Annapolis Residents

Mayor Michael Pantelides announced on February 14, 2017 that effective immediately [Annapolis City Fire Stations & Fire Headquarters](#) are accepting unwanted fireworks & flares for safe disposal by the Annapolis Fire Department Bomb Squad. Annapolis Residents should direct any questions to the Fire Marshall's Office at 410-260-2202.

### Not So Good News

Currently there is no single agency or policy for dealing with the disposal or recycling of unwanted flare and pyrotechnics due to the variation in local, state and federal laws pertaining to the handling & transportation of these devices. Since flares are considered explosive hazardous waste, outdated or unwanted devices should never be thrown overboard, activated in the marine environment or placed in household trash. In addition, flares contain perchlorate (a non-environmentally friendly pollutant & likely human carcinogen) so soaking them in water as a means of disposal is not a viable solution. Since the USCG, USCG Auxiliary & Power Squadron are no longer permitted to accept out-dated marine flares / pyrotechnics (flares, meteors & orange smoke) due to safety concerns, local fire services or police agencies are most likely sources for advice or assistance on proper disposal of such devices in your area (may be able to dispose of them in their burn units). Other potential sources of assistance are local public works, sanitation or Hazmat units. Oftentimes, whatever agency handles ammunition & fireworks disposal may also handle unwanted flares.

### Partial Solution - Handheld Flares

Although no Federal or State Government entities currently accept aerial flares and they do not have any suggestions on what to do with them, if you live in Anne Arundel County, call 410-222-6108 for date & location of hazardous materials drop-offs related to handheld flares. In other counties of MD or areas outside MD, call your local waste management office, fire or police departments to request information on Flare / Pyrotechnic disposal in your area.

### Keeping Expired Flares on Your Vessel

Although there is no consensus position on this topic, retaining them on board a vessel as back-ups may not be a good idea since older flares may become unstable & their burn rates unpredictable. If you decide to do this, they should not be kept with current flares. Store only the most recently expired units in a separate container clearly marked as expired.

### An Alternative to Consider

The Coast Guard has approved use of an [electronic LED SOS light](#) to meet Flare Carry requirements. You may want to consider using this option rather than having to replace on-board pyrotechnic devices every 42 months & dealing with properly disposing of outdated units.

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