

Sea Tow Foundation Receives Grant to Safely Dispose of Flares *Grant Provided By U.S. Coast Guard Sport Fish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund*

SOUTHOLD, N.Y. – July 14, 2020 – [The Sea Tow Foundation](#) – a national nonprofit organization dedicated to the education and awareness of safe boating practices – was recently awarded a new grant from the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Sport Fish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund starting this month to conduct a Flare Disposal Program.

A flare is a pyrotechnic type of Visual Distress Signal (VDS), and all boaters are required by the USCG to carry both day and night VDS any time they are operating on coastal waters, the Great Lakes, or on the waters connecting to these areas. This means that there are millions of boaters carrying flares while on their boats at any moment.



Flares expire after 42 months and must be replaced to meet the USCG's carriage requirements. Simply throwing expired flares in the trash would be an environmental and health hazard as they contain highly toxic chemicals such as perchlorate. Unfortunately, there is no single agency or organization handling the disposal of unwanted/expired flares in the U.S. There is also unclear requirements at the state level about how flares should be disposed of properly.

In answer to the problem of what to do with millions of expired flares, the Sea Tow Foundation proposed working with the USCG to develop a flare disposal pilot program for boaters in Florida. This pilot program would utilize a mobile incineration unit that would traverse Florida over the 2021 year to safely dispose of flares collected at events around the state.

“While flare disposal is not part of a boater’s legal responsibility, it does affect the environment when not disposed of properly,” stated Gail R. Kulp, Sea Tow Foundation’s Executive Director. She added, “Not disposing of flares properly can also impact the safety of boaters if expired flares are stored on board boats.”

Plans for the flare disposal program are still in the early stages, as this grant project just started July 1st, but www.flaredisposal.com has been created and will have more information as it becomes available.

In addition to this grant program, the Sea Tow Foundation has received continued funding for their successful Life Jacket Loaner Program grant for the 13th year ensuring that boaters all around the country can have access to properly fitting life jackets that can be borrowed and returned from a local stand. Life jacket applications for the 2021 boating season will be opening on November 1, 2020 via www.boatingsafety.com.

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Sea Tow Foundation

With a focus on safe boating practices that result in fun on the water, the Sea Tow Foundation – a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization – was established in 2007 by Sea Tow Founder Capt. Joe Frohnhoefer. After his passing in 2015, Captain Joe's legacy continues as the Foundation brings attention to the number of preventable boating-related accidents, injuries, and deaths, and directly addresses prevention methods through education and awareness. More than 600 life jacket loaner stands are now available across the United States and the Foundation's Designate a Sober Skipper program continues to grow. For more information, please visit BoatingSafety.com.