

COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Different types of communications equipment work in different areas, so a boater should make sure the equipment they have will work where they are boating. A boater should carry at least two communication devices that will work when wet.

Technology Communication Devices

- VHF-DSC marine band radios lets a boater talk to other boaters, as well as authorities on land. Digital Selective Calling (DSC) is a method of alerting boaters in distress of their location.
- Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) or Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) transmit the boater's location, enabling the boater to get help quickly if needed.
- Cellphone are only helpful if kept dry and when in range of a cell phone tower

*Non-Technology Communication Devices

- Dye marker (any color)
- Flares to wave, flash or signal SOS
- Flames on a vessel
- Flags with distress signals (black ball and square)
- Gun fired at intervals of 1 minute
- Sound producing device, such as a fog horn to make noise
- A boater may raise and lower their arms as an international recognized signal of distress

*Also see [U.S. Department of Homeland Security/United States Coast Guard Navigation Rules, Rule 37, Distress Signals.](#)

Updated: February 2017