

Guidelines for Pleasure Vessels under 13.7m in length, outlining the combinations of equipment you could consider carrying and using to indicate that you require assistance, depending upon the type of your vessel and where you use it.

Area  Equipment	Craft sailing not more than 3 nm from the coast	Craft sailing in GMDSS Sea Area A1 that are more than 3 nm from the coast	Craft sailing outside of Sea Area A1	Comments
<b>Mobile phone</b>	Last Resort	Last Resort	Last Resort	Keep dry and charged at all times and <b>DO NOT RELY ON A MOBILE PHONE AS YOUR ONLY MEANS OF COMMUNICATION</b>
<b>Marine Radio</b>	Essential A portable VHF should be carried if fitting a fixed DSC VHF set is impractical (e.g. in small open boat where the equipment would not be protected from the elements). A waterproof set is recommended.	Essential A fixed DSC VHF is the recommended equipment	At your discretion A marine radio transceiver with DSC capable of operating in the area of operation should be carried (e.g. MF / HF)  Satellite telephone (Inmarsat) could also be considered.	Highly recommended that DSC VHF is interfaced with GPS for position information and emergency aerial carried in case of dismasting etc  Sea area A1 is the boundary for nominal VHF range although in practice sets might work well beyond that.
<b>EPIRB / PLB</b>	Recommended particularly if only portable VHF is carried.  PLBs (attached to at least one individual) are highly recommended for small open boats, dinghies, wind surfers etc.	Recommended particularly if your VHF is not DSC capable	Recommended however an EPIRB is essential if longer range communications equipment is not carried as DSC VHF may not work outside Sea Area A1.  Individual crew members may additionally wish to carry a PLB.	The EPIRB / PLB should be fitted with a GPS and in addition to the 406MHz distress alert should transmit a 121.5MHz homing signal.  It is a legal requirement that your EPIRB is registered with the MCA EPIRB Registry. It is essential to register PLBs with the registry as well.
<b>SART/ AIS SART</b>	At your discretion	At your discretion	At your discretion	Where a vessel is fitted with AIS personal AIS devices carried by crew members can assist the vessel locating them if they go overboard
<b>Electronic Visual Distress Signals (EVDS)</b>	At your discretion	At your discretion	At your discretion	EVDS are not currently a recognised international distress signal they should not be relied upon to signal you need assistance.  They can be a useful alternative to handheld red flares for 'final mile' locating.
<b>Parachute Flares</b>	4 recommended if no other means of distress alerting is carried	4 recommended if no other means of distress alerting is carried	4 recommended if no other means of distress alerting is carried	The recommended modern method for alerting distress is a DSC VHF distress call or an EPIRB / PLB
<b>Red Handheld Flares</b>	3 unless a reliable alternative day/night locating method is carried	3 unless a reliable alternative day/night locating method is carried	3 unless a reliable alternative day/night locating method is carried	These are valuable for 'final mile' locating by day and by night and in poor visibility, but see EVDS above
<b>Smoke signals buoyant or handheld</b>	Recommended for boating in daylight where no other locating device is carried	Recommended for boating in daylight where no other locating device is carried	Optional for daylight locating. It is assumed that vessels sailing outside area A1 are equipped with a range of locating devices	Valuable for 'final mile' locating in daylight and in reasonable visibility. Contain no explosives. Must burn for a minimum of 3 minutes, but see EVDS above
<b>Day/Night Flares and Mini Signal Personal Survival Flares</b>	Recommended as an alternative where space might be at a premium such as for windsurfing	At your discretion	At your discretion	These are particularly useful as a personal distress flares
<b>Luminous Dye Marker</b>	At your discretion	At your discretion	At your discretion	Requires testing and then will only useful as an alternative by day