

# APPENDIX G



## GUIDANCE REGARDING THE HANDLING OF FLARES

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Owner		

## **1.0 Guidance regarding the handing of Flares and Fireworks in Sports Grounds**

Whilst this guidance has been produced to assist clubs consider the safety management implications of the apparent increasing use and indiscriminate discharging of pyrotechnics (i.e. flares, smokes and fireworks) at sports grounds it can also be applied to outdoor events such as Bingley Music Live.

Section 15.10c of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds advises that ground management adopts and enforces a clear policy to prevent and prohibit spectators from taking flares or fireworks into a sports ground. Such policies should promote various options, including the use of intelligence and the searching of individuals suspected of being in possession of such articles. However, it is also important that ground management have procedures in place to safely deal with any flares that may be confiscated and with any that may be discharged within the sports grounds.

This guidance therefore seeks to provide information to assist ground management develop its policies and procedures.

It should also be noted that the Sporting Events Control of Alcohol Act 1985 (as amended by the Public Order Act 1986) makes it an offence for a person to have in their possession any firework / flare / smoke emitter etc whilst attempting to enter or whilst in a football ground and provides police with the power to search people and to arrest persons committing offences under the Act.

### **1.1 General issues regarding flares**

- Flares come in a variety of different categories which are shown below in '1.5 Types of Flares'.
- If a flare is out of date (beyond its 3 year life span) it can become more unstable and react in a different way to that intended thereby causing potential injury to the operator and others around.
- There is anecdotal evidence to suggest people use events as an excuse to 'use' their out of date stocks.
- Hand flares and rocket flares generate extreme heat which will readily ignite any nearby combustible material causing fires and/or burns to persons.
- Extinguishing a flare is extremely difficult as often the flare contains burning metals.
- Similarly smoke generators and other non flare units also become extremely hot and can cause serious burns to people attempting to move them.
- The discharging of a flare within a crowd may well create crowd disturbance and disruption as people try to move quickly away from the immediate area.
- Flares which generate smoke can cause further distress.
- Dependent on the location, the smoke can set off fire detection and sprinkler systems.

### **1.2 The Handling of Unused Flares**

Flares are regarded as explosives and thus their regulation comes under The Manufacture and Storage of Explosives Regulations 2005. Guidance on appropriate storage conditions is available in the Approved Code of Practice to these Regulations (ISBN 0-7176-2816-7), paragraphs 260-323.

Where unused flares have been confiscated at a sports ground, and until they are disposed of, ground management will be responsible for their safe storage. The amount of explosives in individual flares is relatively small and it is highly unlikely that the quantity of confiscated flares will exceed the 5kg limit for which a licence is required for the storage of flares. However ground management are advised to contact their Local Authority (Trading Standards or EHO) to establish their requirements for the registration of storage facilities for explosives

and have written protocols with their local police as to how seized flares can be secured as evidence (if appropriate) and safely disposed of.

### **1.3 Seizure of Pyrotechnics**

Whilst some flares, and other pyrotechnic devices, are quite bulky and may be easily identified others are quite small enabling an individual to secrete them on their person so that it can be taken into a sports ground and discharged during the event. Clearly such behaviour is potentially dangerous. Ground management should do everything possible to prevent such articles from being taken into their ground and also educate spectators as to the inherent dangers.

Ground management are advised to include instruction on the handling of flares etc. as part of their ground contingency plans. Plans should include consideration of safe areas for storage and arrangements for their eventual disposal. The action to be taken when a flare has been seized from an individual should be covered in a steward training and be included in the stewards manual.

### **1.4 Handling pyrotechnics that have been discharged**

As previously highlighted there are a number of different types of pyrotechnic articles available and each can present their own problems when indiscriminately discharged amongst a crowd of people. Ground management need to ensure their training and contingency plans identify what to do in such circumstances. The three main types of pyrotechnics are:

- those which discharge large amounts of smoke;
- those which emit intense light and heat (flares). These present a heat/fire hazard; and
- those which can be propelled at speed into the sky (parachute/aerial flares and line throwing rockets), possibly with a loud bang (Maroons). These present both a projection and fire hazard. These present the highest risk and have been responsible for at least one fatality at a UK sporting venue in recent years

Flares used are typically of the hand-held type having an integral handle. Once such flares have been set off, they cannot be easily extinguished and will typically burn for between 30 to 60 seconds, following which it will no longer discharge any light or smoke. However, it will still be too hot to handle for quite some time after and may still present an ignition source for any combustible materials around. Provided there is no immediate threat of escalation or injury, it is safer to allow the flare to burn out before any action is taken. If a burning flare is dropped on the floor, clear area and cover with sand. Once light ceases, use welder's glove or similar to remove remains by the handle and place in a metal bucket partially filled with sand. Similar precautions should be taken with hand-held smokes.

Any articles that do not have an evident handle should be handled with appropriate gloves or tongs as they will also remain hot for some considerable time (30 minutes plus). When handling spent pyrotechnics the top should always point to the ground and away from people.

The following key points should be considered in preparing for and dealing with discharged flares:

- Appropriate risk assessments for the sports ground should take place and personal protection equipment in the form of suitable gloves, buckets and sand should be provided for trained staff.

- Carry out an event specific risk assessment covering the possibility of flares, fireworks, smokes etc being discharged on that occasion, and ensure the medical provision includes facilities to deal with burns and smoke inhalation.
- Communicate with visiting supporters in advance of the event (if applicable)
- Provide appropriate signage and/or programme notes describing the dangers of setting off flares.
- Where a flare has been discharged, personnel should make sure that everyone is moved far enough away from the flare so that they are not in danger of being exposed to the intense heat, smoke or flame.
- Special attention should be paid to any nearby articles which may react to the heat and become ignited themselves.
- Only suitably trained staff should be used to deal with discharged flares.
- Other safety personnel should be instructed not to touch such devices.
- The use of water on such flares is not effective (and sometimes can further escalate the effect), but dry sand can be used to cover the flare.
- The flare should not be handled. However, a bucket of sand should be upturned over it to completely smother the flare.
- The sand should be left in place for a minimum of 30 minutes before any attempt is made to retrieve the flare.
- Used flares should be placed into a metal bucket and covered with sand.
- Under no circumstances should any person handle such a used flare with bare hands, even if there is no visible flame.
- Where the discharge of a flare has been witnessed by ground staff and captured on CCTV, there will be the need to retain any evidence and prove continuity in order to assist any potential prosecution of offenders.
- Where a flare or other form of pyrotechnic device has been ignited every effort should be made by staff controlling CCTV to capture the incident and obtain close up images of the individual(s) involved for evidential purposes. There will be a need to retain such evidence and prove continuity as part of any police investigation and subsequent prosecution.
- If it is suspected that an attempt has been made to set off a flare, smoke or firework and it has failed to function, wherever possible it should not be moved for at least 30 minutes. If of the hand-held type always hold by the handle with the top facing away. Place on sand and contact police to arrange removal.
- Any burns experienced from a flare are likely to be extreme and first aid teams need to be made aware.

## 1.5 Types of Flares

Examples of hand-held flares and parachute-rockets (marine pyrotechnics)

