



# EAA VMC Club

## Question of the Month

### **This Month's Question and Answer:**

**Question:** Pyrotechnic Signaling Devices (e.g., flares, flare guns) are often carried on general aviation aircraft to be used in emergencies. However, these can also pose a hazard when the aircraft is in flight. Does the FAA provide guidance regarding precautions to be taken to reduce the safety risks?

**Answer:** Yes. According to AC 91.58A, *Use of Pyrotechnic Visual Distress Signaling Devices in Aviation*, paragraph 7, "HANDLING AND STORAGE. a. If young children are carried on board your aircraft, careful stowage of visual distress signals becomes especially important. Projected devices, such as pistol-launched and hand-held parachute flares and meteors, have many of the characteristics of a firearm and should be handled with the same caution.

b. Pyrotechnic devices should be stored in a cool, dry location and be readily accessible in case of an emergency. Care should be taken to prevent puncturing or damaging of the device's covering. It is recommended that pyrotechnic devices be stored in a watertight container and prominently marked "DISTRESS SIGNALS."

c. U.S. Coast Guard approved pyrotechnic devices carry a service life expiration date. Currently, this date may not exceed 42 months from the date of manufacture. The U.S. Coast Guard indicates that it is acceptable to keep recently expired signals as extra equipment, although they gradually lose their effectiveness with age.