

A 'distress flare amnesty' for private boat owners is taking place at four south coast marinas, starting next month.

The Royal Yachting Association has announced that the initiative is being run by Hampshire Constabulary Marine Unit in conjunction with Ramora UK, one of the UK's leading bomb disposal companies and the marinas.

The disposal of out-of-date flares is a growing problem for boat owners who face severe penalties if they fail to follow the correct procedures.

Out-of-date flares can be delivered to the following sites in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Some of the events coincide with open days or boat shows already taking place at the marinas:

Saturday 26 April at Northney Marina MDL

Saturday 10 May at Hamble Point Marina

Saturday 17 May at Cowes Yacht Haven

Sunday 10 August at Lymington Yacht Haven

Sunday 19 October at Hamble Point Marina MDL

Ramora UK's managing director David Welch said: 'We are delighted to partner Hampshire Constabulary Marine Unit in running this service.'

'The collection and disposal of these potentially dangerous items is vitally important to public safety and should be dealt with by experts; we are proud to provide this to members of the public.'

Up to 10 flares accepted

Up to 10 flares per private individual will be accepted free of charge however, the organisers will be asking for a charitable donation. Previous other events have charged £2 per flare.

Disposal of more than 10 flares will only be possible by prior agreement.

Over the year the organisers hope to raise enough money through the donations to buy a sailing dinghies which they will then donate to a sailing club for the use of young people who would not normally get the opportunity to experience the sport of sailing.

Sgt Tony Birr, of the Hampshire Constabulary Marine Unit, added: 'This is another great example of how we can work with our partners to provide an effective service to the marine community whilst promoting public safety and giving something back to society in the form of youth activities.'

For further information please contact Hampshire Police Marine Unit via email: marine@hampshire.pnn.police.uk

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