



Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) yachts must carry both LED and pyrotechnic flares

CROSSING AN OCEAN

What safety equipment is required for an offshore rally?

Every year more than 200 boats set sail from Gran Canaria to the Caribbean on the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC).

The organisers, World Cruising Club (WCC), have strict safety requirements for participants and check all boats before departure from Las Palmas.

They expect all boats to carry a minimum quantity and quality of safety and communications equipment, and to have undertaken training in its usage, heavy weather sailing techniques, and managing emergencies.

The requirements are based on the ISAF standards, and include:

- An offshore liferaft with a more than 24 hour pack

- 406MHz EPIRB
- A means of sending and receiving email at sea (satellite phone or SSB radio/pactor modem)
- AIS receiver and man-overboard equipment.
- Every crewmember must have an inflatable combined lifejacket-harness (PFD) with a spray hood, crotch strap and safety line.

Flares

Regarding flares, World Cruising Club require all yachts to carry pyrotechnic flares and a minimum of:

- Four red handheld flares (two of which



An easily accessible EPIRB behind its cover

may be electronic flares – these are LED, not laser)

- Two buoyant orange float smokes (required for World Sailing Offshore Special Regulations Cat 1).

Flares must be pyrotechnic SOLAS compliant, not older than the stamped expiry date, or four years from date of manufacture, for the end date of the rally. Pyrotechnic flares need to be stowed in a

watertight container, with protective gloves and goggles. It's important that the crew know how to use these, and that the container is kept somewhere readily accessible in an emergency.

What the boat owners say

Nick Deacon and Michelle Cruwys are sailing ARC 21 with their grown-up children on *Maalu 4*, a Nyad 511

Michelle: We've got pyrotechnic flares and LED ones because the ARC specifies we have both. Personally I think LED flares are way better; they're super-bright. They're only handheld, though, not rocket flares, but you still get that brilliant light. I must say, the idea of holding a [pyrotechnic] handheld red flare doesn't appeal to me, especially not in the liferaft.

I'm a retired consultant paediatrician and I'm very keen on safety. I've got a very well stocked medical kit.

We're in our 60s and I want to be able to manage everything I can at sea.



Nick Deacon and Michelle Cruwys

Burns are my biggest worry.

Nick: We did a lot of preparation for the trip. We have a new liferaft, jonbuoy, lifeline, handy billy for lifting people out, rope ladder for the side, as well as the usual set of flares, two EPIRBs, some

electronic flares, and lifejackets which have the mini AIS units attached. They're a great idea, because if someone falls overboard the chartplotter will take you back to them.

We did the RYA Safety at Sea one-day course with a liferaft in a swimming pool. That was really good. We learned techniques for getting in and out, and for staying warm.

We made sure our children went and did that course as well. If it's pitch dark, at least the course will give you some familiarity with a liferaft.

Find helpful advice about safety kit at:

- worldcruising.com/arc/safety.aspx
- vimeo.com/449603940/d0891fd1bb
- vimeo.com/449582479/556566e7e2