LAW ENFORCEMENT BULLETIN



FLARE DEPLOYMENT, STORAGE, DISPOSAL, AND TRAINING: NEW SAMPLE POLICY

Emergency road flares remain a common traffic-control and scene-warning tool for law enforcement, but they are flammable devices that produce hot flames, smoke, and chemical residue. Improper storage in trunks, equipment bins, or passenger compartments increases the risk of accidental ignition, fire spread, burns, and property damage, and improper road flare use can increase the risk of fire or injury.

To help agencies address these risks, a new sample policy, *Road Flare Deployment, Storage, Disposal, and Training*, is now available in the Law Enforcement Accreditation Plus Sample Policy Portal. Agencies are encouraged to review the policy and adapt it to local needs.

Incident Context: Why Storage Matters

A police vehicle fire ensued after it was rear-ended at high speed; reporting noted that the trunk contained a box of road flares among other equipment, and that the vehicle's fuel tank and fuel system were intact, so the cause of the fire origin was undetermined but widely believed to involve equipment stowed in the trunk.[1] In a separate incident, a police vehicle in New Jersey became engulfed in flames, and it was determined that the likely cause was an accidental ignition of a road flare in the trunk.[2] In Michigan, an officer was seriously injured when he wedged a flare in the opening of a manhole cover, which sparked a significant explosion due to the presence of methane gas.[3] Together, these incidents show why agencies must provide strong policy guidance and training on flare storage, deployment, and handling.

What the Sample Policy Addresses

- Deployment: When flares should and should not be used, and safe lighting and placement.
- Storage: Directions concerning protective containers, temperature and moisture limits, and separation from combustible materials.
- Extinguishment and post-use handling, including burn, smoke, and exposure precautions.
- Disposal: Handling spent, damaged, or expired flares and required documentation.
- Training: Officer and supervisor instruction, including non-pyrotechnic alternatives such as LED flares.
- Injury prevention: Scene assessment before lighting a flare, protective equipment such as gloves and eye protection, and safe positioning away from traffic and ignition hazards.

Recommended Agency Considerations

- Review the sample policy in the Accreditation Plus Sample Policy Portal and adopt it or modify existing agency policies.
- Inventory patrol vehicles and other locations to identify how and where flares are stored.
- Add flare storage to fleet and supervisory vehicle inspections, and train personnel on the policy.

If you have any questions, please contact your Law Enforcement Risk Control Consultant, or if you need assistance in accessing the Law Enforcement Accreditation Plus Portal, contact the J.A. Montgomery Law Enforcement Team at lawenforcementteam@jamontgomery.com

[1]Folger, B. (2022, July 27). What's In Your Trunk?
[2]Camden County Municipal Joint Insurance Fund Claims Meeting, August 2026
[3]Kinsey, R. (2010, June 10). An Ann Arbor Police Officer Learns a Hard Lesson About the Proper Placement of Road Flares.

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