NAV-03 — Emergency Signaling

The Two-Part Signal

Turns a location you can describe into a signal a search aircraft, vessel, or rescue team can actually see, understand, and act on.

BOTTOM LINE UP FRONT

Emergency signaling is the set of methods for telling searchers that you need help and where you are. It is not the same as carrying survival gear — a beacon in a bag signals nothing until it is used correctly — and it is not a substitute for telling someone your plans before you leave.

WHY THIS MATTERS

A rescue that can't find you isn't a rescue in progress — it's a search problem someone else now has to solve first.

Every method in this course, from a mirror flash to a satellite beacon, is judged against one test: does it say that help is needed, does it say where the sender is, and can it be sustained long enough for someone to act on it. Signaling technique is the difference between a distress call that reaches someone and one that doesn't.

> *"Does it say that you need help, and does it say where you are?" — the two-part test this course keeps coming back to.*

KEY CONCEPTS

Two-Part Test	Every distress signal must communicate both that help is needed and where the sender is.
Rule of Threes	Three signals, evenly paced, read as human-made rather than natural or accidental.
Ground-to-Air Panel Code	Large, high-contrast ground symbols — V, X, N, Y, and others — that a trained aircrew reads without radio contact.

COURSE LESSONS

Lesson 1	The Two-Part Signal — why every signal must say both that you need help and where you are.
Lesson 2	Recognized Distress Signals — the COLREGS/SOLAS baseline list, and why misusing any is a crime.
Lesson 3	Visual Signals: Mirror and Pyrotechnics — aiming a mirror, and choosing the right flare.
Lesson 4	The Ground-to-Air Panel Code — the symbol set, body signals, and reading an aircraft's acknowledgment.
Lesson 5	Audible Signals — whistle, air horn, improvised noise, and firearms, all on the same paced pattern.
Lesson 6	Electronic and Satellite Signaling — beacons, messengers, marine/aviation radio, and coordinate formats.
Lesson 7	Building Your Signal Plan — kit selection by activity and the final principles tying it together.

DOCTRINAL SOURCES

Source	Publisher	Relevance
COLREGS Annex IV	International Maritime Organization	Baseline list of internationally recognized distress signals
SOLAS Convention	International Maritime Organization	Legal basis for required distress signaling equipment and procedures
ICAO Annex 12	International Civil Aviation Organization	Ground-to-air visual signal code and aircraft acknowledgment signals