Boating & Alcohol

Boating and drinking can be a deadly mix. One-third of all boating fatalities in Oregon each year are alcohol-related.

Know the law in Oregon:

- Operating a boat while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs is a crime in Oregon.
- By operating a boat in Oregon, you have given consent to submit to field sobriety and breath tests.
- The law applies to all boats, motorized and non-motorized, which includes rafts, kayaks, and canoes.
- Officers can arrest for signs of impairment.
- A blood alcohol concentration of 0.08% is considered legally “under the influence.”

Alcohol impairs these crucial functions:

JUDGEMENT - Alcohol impairs your ability to make good decisions. A person may take dangerous risks when under the influence of alcohol.

REACTION TIME – Alcohol slows your reaction time greatly, increasing the risk of collision or other accidents.

VISION – Alcohol impairs your ability to see clearly and affects your peripheral view and depth perception.

BALANCE & COORDINATION – Alcohol impairs your balance and coordination increasing the odds of falling overboard. The ability to coordinate arm and leg movements decreases, making it difficult to swim.
Legal consequences if convicted for boating under the influence of intoxicants (BUII):

- Pay fines of up to $6,250 and/or up to a year in jail.
- Complete a boating safety education class.
- Lose boat operation privileges for one year.
- Boat registration(s) are suspended for up to three years.

Before you drink, think:

- The effects of alcohol are more pronounced on the water because a person is exposed to wind, glare, noise, vibration, and the motion of the boat.
- Boating collisions and falling overboard are more likely to occur when a person is intoxicated.
- Everyone should wear a life jacket at all times.

Some additional facts:

- One 12 oz. beer (5% alcohol) contains the same amount of alcohol as one 4 oz. glass of wine (12% alcohol) or 1½ oz. (shots) of 80-proof liquor, or 1 oz. (shot) of 100-proof liquor.
- Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant, not a stimulant.
- Alcohol dehydrates the body.