



FACT SHEET: Boating Under the Influence of Intoxicants (BUII)

Alcohol, Drugs + Water = A Dangerous Mix

- The U.S. Coast Guard reports that alcohol use is the leading contributing factor in fatal boating accidents; it was listed as the leading factor in 19% of the deaths, nationwide in 2017.
- Impaired passengers are just as likely to suffer injury or death as intoxicated boat operators because most boating fatalities occur from falling overboard.
- In Oregon, a boater is considered legally “under the influence” if the boater’s blood alcohol concentration (BAC) is 0.08 percent or higher. Marine officers can still arrest boaters for observed impairment below 0.08 percent. Other substances that impair operation can also lead to a BUII arrest –including marijuana.
- Falling overboard, missteps at the dock and falling when boarding a boat result in the most injuries, since judgment and balance are the first signs of impairment.
- When people consume alcohol, their judgment is the first thing impaired, and they often take risks that they normally would not, such as reckless operation, and other behavior that can lead to accidents and injuries.
- Operator inattention, operator inexperience, excessive speed, improper lookout and alcohol rank as the top primary contributing factors in accidents. This includes motorized and non-motorized boaters! Collisions increased in 2016 accounting for more than half of the accidents reported.



The Amplified Effects of Drinking While Boating

- One alcoholic beverage on the water has the same perceived effect as having three on land, according to recent studies by the U.S. Coast Guard’s Office of Boating Safety.
- Alcohol consumption affects judgment, balance, vision, and coordination. Environmental factors that come with boating — such as wind, sun, noise, wave action and boat motion — magnify impairment.
- An automatic gasping response often occurs when a person’s face or upper body is suddenly immersed in cold water. This is an involuntary response, and an intoxicated person is more likely to inhale water into his or her lungs when submerged into cold water. Extremities will cramp faster, making self-rescue incredibly difficult.



Drinking and Boating: The Legal Consequences

- A drug or alcohol-impaired boat operator who is arrested for Boating Under the Influence of Intoxicants (BUII –which includes inhalants, marijuana, prescription drugs, alcohol) faces the following:
 - Fines of up to \$6,250 and up to one year in jail
 - Loss of boat operation privileges
 - Boat registration suspended for up to three years