

## Boating While Intoxicated

Few issues are as controversial as boating while intoxicated. Many people feel like it's not as difficult or dangerous to operate a boat while drinking as it is a vehicle. Nothing could be further than the truth. Boating while intoxicated is a serious issue and one that shouldn't be ignored.

A lot of people liken a day on the boat with tossing back some beers or drinks. After all, what tastes best on a hot summer day but a cold, cold drink? One or two beers is probably fine, but ideally, you shouldn't be drinking at all while you are driving a boat.

Boating drunk is a crime on many waterways. Just like DUI laws, regulations vary from state to state and from place to place. But in many places, the law taking boating while intoxicated as a serious offense.

Why is drinking and boating so dangerous? Well, besides the fact that alcohol impairs your judgment, a lot has to do with the vehicle you are driving. A boat can go much, much faster than most cars plus boats don't come with safety restraints. If you should happen to hit something, the possibility of being ejected into the water is nearly 100 percent.

There are no marked lanes on waterways, so you have a lot of leeway in steering. It's easy to become distracted when you are drunk and it's even easier to misjudge distances and where other boats are located.

Boats are controlled by both people and water. The waves can throw off even the most experienced captain. When you have a drunk captain, it's easy to lose control of the water craft with dire circumstances.

Alcohol has a dehydrating effect on the body. Add the hot sun to an alcohol mixture and you get a very tired captain. You run the risk of falling asleep at the helm or being drowsy and inattentive.

Waterways do have police officers as well. They monitor the waters just as a traffic cop would monitor the roads. If you are boating while intoxicated, you can be "pulled over" and administered a field sobriety test. The water cop will assess your physical condition and decide whether or not you should receive a boating while intoxicated citation. If so, you risk losing both your boat and your license.

Boating while intoxicated is a big no-no in the boating world. It really is

possible to have fun without alcoholic beverages. If you feel you just can't be on your boat without a drink, practice moderation and keep everyone safe!