



Booze and Boats are a Bad Mixture

Alcohol and automobiles are a deadly combination. Alcohol and water sports are another lethal mix.

Slowed response time and impaired judgment lead to overestimating one's abilities to swim or operate a watercraft.

Here are some suggestions for a safe summer on the road and on the water:

- Do not drive if you have been drinking. Drunk driving affects us all. A study has shown two out of five persons will be involved in an alcohol-related crash sometime in their lives - as a driver, passenger, pedestrian or occupant of another vehicle.
- Also do not use drugs before or during driving. Beware of prescription and over-the-counter drugs that can cause impairment, such as allergy remedies.
- On occasions when you might be having a few beers such as backyard barbecues, July holiday celebrations or sports tournaments, arrange ahead of time for transportation with a designated non-drinking driver.
- Stay sober for water sports. Drunk and drugged drivers operate boats and jet skis at excessive speed and without regard to the safety of others or possible obstructions in the water. When a power boat slams into a dock at high speed or upsets another watercraft, you can suspect alcohol as a contributing factor. Even when a boat is operated in a seemingly safe manner, drugs or alcohol can slow the reaction time in an emergency such as having to turn or stop for an obstacle or a fallen water-skier.
- Swimming and diving are also best done sober. Many people are using wheelchairs today because of diving into water when they were too loaded to notice the depth or underwater obstructions. Alcohol or drugs can also give you too much confidence in your swimming abilities, causing you to exceed the limits of your endurance and skill.
- Wear an approved Personal Flotation Device in a boat. Non-swimmers should also wear PFDs on docks and around pools. One study showed **85%** of boating drowning victims were not wearing personal flotation devices.
- Learn to swim if you spend time on boats or at the beach. Community pools offer lessons year-round.



Summer can be the best time of the year, and the warm days we spend with family and friends at the beach, cottage or ball field can be the best times of our lives. Remember that misuse of drugs or alcohol during these activities can turn a good time into a nightmare.

Be Safe!