



Washington State Parks Boating Programs

BOATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Penalties for operating a boat under the influence (BUI) - RCW 79A.60.04*

Boating and drinking can be a deadly mix. Alcohol use while boating is the leading contributing factor in 17% of all recreational boating fatalities in Washington state.

BUI laws:

- A BUI conviction is a gross misdemeanor punishable by up to a \$5,000 fine and/or 364 days in jail.
- Officers with probable cause can ask the boat operator to submit to a breathalyzer test. If the operator refuses to take the test, he/she will be issued a Class 1 Civil Infraction.
- The penalty for refusal to take a breathalyzer test is \$1,000. RCW 3.62.090 (public safety and education assessment) adds 105% to the penalty. The total fine could be around \$2,050.
- The legal limit for alcohol is still .08 and for marijuana it is 5.0 nanograms.

Alcohol and drug use strongly affect the following critical functions:

Vision - Alcohol and drugs impair your ability to see clearly and affects your peripheral view and depth perception.

Judgement - Alcohol and drugs impair your ability to make good decisions. People have a tendency to take more risks when under the influence.

Reaction Time - Alcohol and drugs slow down your reaction time, increasing the risk of collision or other types of accidents.

Balance and Coordination - Alcohol and drugs affects your balance and coordination, increasing the odds of falling overboard. The ability to coordinate your arms and legs decreases, making it difficult to swim.



* RCW stands for Revised Code of Washington - RCWs are Washington State Law.

