

# Alcohol, Boating and Water recreation

- Alcohol is involved in 30 – 50% of all adolescent and adult drownings.<sup>1,2</sup>
- Alcohol was involved in one-third of US boating fatalities in 2004. (US Boat Stats US Coast Guard)
- In Finland between 1987 - 1995, more than 63% of accidental boating and personal watercraft fatalities were associated with alcohol use.<sup>3</sup>
- Alcohol consumption by a parent or guardian may cause a lapse of supervision that contributes to child drowning.<sup>4</sup>
- In a New York state study of boating fatalities, boaters with a blood alcohol level of just 100 mg/dl (.01) or greater had a 16 times greater risk of drowning than those with no alcohol.<sup>5</sup>
- The risk of death for both operators and passengers is increased significantly with increased blood alcohol level. Therefore,

alcohol and boating prevention efforts should target not only operators but passengers as well, many of whom die when they fall intoxicated overboard when the boat is not moving.<sup>6</sup>

- Alcohol and drug use are proven risk factors in personal watercraft operation.<sup>7</sup>
- A study of teenage diving victims with severe spinal injuries also showed that alcohol was a factor in 49% of the cases.<sup>8</sup>
- In a study of open water diving injuries, risk factors included diving from a pier or dock, lack of familiarity with water and use of alcohol.<sup>9</sup>
- Experimental studies on diving while drinking show that divers with a blood alcohol count of 40 mg/dl dive significantly deeper, to a level risking spinal cord injury, although they themselves notice no difference in the depth.<sup>10</sup>

## References

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- (This fact sheet has been reviewed by EUROCARE which was formed in 1990 as an alliance of voluntary and non-governmental organisations concerned with the impact of the European Union on alcohol policy in Member States)*

The European Child Safety Alliance is a Programme of EuroSafe and is hosted by the Consumer Safety Institute in the Netherlands

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