

Long term studies by the Lifesaving Society of Canada have shown that approximately 40% of boating-related fatalities, operator impairment has been a contributing factor. And most of people may not be aware that there are environmental stressors that when they are on the water that can have an effect on them? These include the rocking motion of the boat, waves, sun, wind, noise and vibration. They can intensify the effects of alcohol or drugs, making drinking or smoking while boating even more dangerous than drinking and driving. And while an adult may not be the operator of a boat, they still need to remember that “having a few drinks or taking drugs” while out on the water, by extension, may lead to being impaired while driving home.

Operating a boat while under the influence of alcohol or drugs is treated just the same as operating a vehicle while under the influence. This is a chargeable offence under the Criminal Code of Canada.

You are considered to be ‘impaired’ or ‘under the influence’ if:

- a) Your blood alcohol level exceeds 0.08
(80 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood)*
- b) You have 2 nanograms (ng) or more of TCH per ml of blood*
- c) Your blood levels when you combined alcohol and cannabis, is 50 mg or more of alcohol per 100 ml blood and 2.5 ng or more of THC per ml of blood.*
- d) You have any detectable amount of other drugs (LSD, “magic mushrooms”, PCP, cocaine, heroin, etc.) in your system*

All Provinces and Territories:

The fines and penalties for driving a boat while under the influence of alcohol or drugs are the same as those applicable to operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. **There is NO difference between drunk driving and drunk boating.**

If you suspect an adult is under the influence, work with another responsible adult to remove the keys of the vessel. If you have your PCOC, you can drive the boat to safety.

British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, PEI, Newfoundland & Labrador, Northwest Territories, Yukon, Nunavut:

It is illegal to transport OPEN alcohol. All alcohol must be in a sealed container. Boat passengers may legally consume alcohol on board a boat so long as the boat has a permanent toilet, cooking facilities, sleeping facilities and it is anchored or docked.

Ontario:

An Ontario boater convicted of operating a boat while under the influence of alcohol or drugs may have their driver's license suspended for a minimum of 1 year. Ontario's Ignition Interlock Program will also apply to those convicted of drunk boating (Bill 209).

Quebec:

The fines and penalties for driving a boat while under the influence of alcohol or drugs are the same as those applicable to operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. There is NO difference between drunk driving and drunk boating. However, boaters in Quebec are permitted to carry open alcohol on boats while the boat is underway. Even the boat operator may do so, as long as their BAC level does not exceed the legal limit of 80 mg.


Contact the local RCMP, Sûreté du Québec (SQ) or Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) for more information about the laws for boating with alcohol in your area.

"Impaired Operation of a Vessel"
(Canadian law):

1st Offence =

\$ Minimum Fine of **\$1000**

2nd Offence =

 At Least **30 Days** of Imprisonment

3rd & Subsequent Offences =

 At Least **120 Days** of Imprisonment