



WEST VIRGINIA

ALCOHOL BEVERAGE CONTROL ADMINISTRATION

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PRESS ADVISORY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SUMMER SAFETY MESSAGE

Charleston, W.Va. - From hiking to biking, camping to climbing, on a boat or ATV, safety first is the message from the West Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control Administration (WVABCA), West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) and the West Virginia Fire Commission Office of the State Fire Marshal.

Adults who are legally allowed to consume alcohol are advised that the sun and heat may cause a negative physical reaction and have unintended consequences. Some alcohol and mixers may increase dehydration and cause your Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) to reach a higher level more rapidly and lead to impaired judgment, lowered inhibitions, slowed reactions and a loss of coordination. Elevated BAC levels could impact the body's ability to process the alcohol consumed and could lead to sickness or a life threatening situation, such as heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

Recreational activities on the water pose a greater risk of injury and death when alcohol is consumed. In 2023, there were 8 boating incidents, with 2 fatalities in West Virginia. The WVDNR will be working throughout the summer season to enforce the laws and keep everyone safe. Their efforts increase for "Operation Dry Water," a nationwide enforcement campaign designed to heighten awareness will take place over the Fourth of July weekend. According to Capt. Goodson with the WVDNR, last year 70 DNR officers participated in "Operation Dry Water" and 857 vessels were contacted. During this 3-day campaign, 32 citations were issued, 2 BUI's were issued, and 98 boating warnings were issued.

As much as pools, lakes, and rivers are part of summer, so is true of cookouts and fireworks. According to WV State Fire Marshal's Office public information officer Tim Rock, there were over 15,600 emergency room (ER) visits in 2020 in the United States (US). Sparklers account for nearly one-fourth of these ER visits. According to the National Fire Protection Association there are on average 19,700 ER visits due to grilling accidents and 10,600 homes fires caused by grilling.

WVABCA Commissioner Fred Wooton said, "Keeping everyone safe during the summertime is our goal. I would encourage ALL West Virginians to join together and look out for one another this summer season."

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