



WEST VIRGINIA

ALCOHOL BEVERAGE CONTROL ADMINISTRATION
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PRESS ADVISORY

May 21, 2025

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.

The combination of alcohol and hot temperatures can increase dehydration and cause your Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) to reach a higher level more quickly. This can lead to impaired judgment, slowed reaction time and loss of coordination. Elevated BAC levels can impact the body's ability to process the alcohol consumed and could lead to a life-threatening situation, such as heat exhaustion, heat stroke or even death.

Recreational activities on the water pose a greater risk of injury and death when alcohol is consumed. In 2024, there were 15 boating incidents, with 6 fatalities in West Virginia. The WVDNR Law Enforcement (LE) Section will be working throughout the summer season to enforce the laws and keep everyone safe. The WVDNR LE Section's efforts increase for "Operation Dry Water," a nationwide enforcement campaign designed to heighten awareness and enforcement of Boating Under the Influence (BUI), will take place over the Fourth of July weekend. According to Capt. Goodson with the WVDNR, last year 63 Natural Resource Police Officers participated in "Operation Dry Water" and 815 vessels were contacted. During this three-day campaign, 50 citations were issued, 3 BUI's were issued, and 126 boating warnings were issued.

As much as pools, lakes, and rivers are part of summer, so are cookouts, fairs, festivals and fireworks. The US Consumer Products Safety Commission reports that in 2023 there were eight deaths and an estimated 9,700 injuries involving fireworks. In addition, WV State Fire Marshal's Office public information officer Tim Rock, reported that 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 and message." Commissioner Wooton encourages all West Virginians to be safe, responsible and look out for one another this summer season.

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