



WEST VIRGINIA

ALCOHOL BEVERAGE CONTROL ADMINISTRATION

FREDRIC L. WOOTON, COMMISSIONER

PRESS ADVISORY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SUMMER SAFETY MESSAGE

Charleston, W.Va. - The West Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control Administration (WVABCA) is uniting with the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) and the West Virginia Fire Commission Office of the State Fire Marshal to remind the public of potential hazards that can occur during the summer as many West Virginians and tourists are more active outdoors.

If you choose to consume alcohol and are legally able to do so, please be aware 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 2022, there were 11 boating incidents, with 3 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 76 DNR officers participated in "Operation Dry Water" and 2,072 vessels were contacted. During this 3-day campaign, 66 citations were issued, 6 BUI's were issued, and 196 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, approximately 7 in 10 adults in the US own a grill/smoker. From 2014-2018 there were nearly 19,700 ER visits due to grilling accidents and during this same time frame there were 8,900 fires caused by grilling.

From hiking to biking, camping to climbing, or riding an ATV or kayak, safety first is our message. WVABCA Commissioner Fred Wooton said, "Keeping everyone safe during the summertime is our goal. As our agencies have united, I would encourage ALL West Virginians to join together and look out for one another this summer. Remember, water and alcohol only mix well in a glass."

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