

# Drinking and Boating in Canada



In all provinces of Canada, operating a boat while under the influence of alcohol is illegal. **In some provinces, no one on board can consume alcoholic beverages while the boat is being operated.** In Ontario, you can't even transport alcohol unless the boat is classed as a "home" with sleeping accommodations and a head. There are differences between provinces, but all require alcohol on board to be packaged and out of reach.

In Ontario, when you visit shore or even on your own boat, provincial law says you must not "display alcohol to the public". That might include a bottle of alcohol sitting in your boat's cockpit. Alcohol consumed at a picnic table on a dock or ashore is usually illegal. In Ontario, the Highway Traffic Act applies to "anyone operating or having the care or control of a vessel". In other words, anyone found operating a boat while impaired can face an **on-the-spot vehicle driver's license suspension**, with additional suspension if convicted

Ontario Liquor License Act:

Sec. 32 (3) No person shall operate or have care or control of a boat that is underway while there is contained in the boat any liquor, except under the authority of a license or permit.

Sec.32 (4) Exception-Subsection (3) does not apply if the liquor in the boat, (a) is in a container that is unopened and the seal unbroken, (b) is stored in a closed compartment.

Sec. 32 (5) A police officer who has reasonable grounds to believe that liquor is being unlawfully kept in a vehicle or boat may at any time, without warrant, enter and search the vehicle or boat and search any person found in it.

Sec.32 (6) Definition-In this section, "boat" includes any ship or boat or any other description of vessel used or designed to be used in the navigation of water.

## CONSUMING LIQUOR IN A BOAT, ONTARIO LIQUOR LICENCE ACT REGULATION 718

Sec. 3 (7) A boat with permanent sleeping accommodation and permanent cooking and sanitary facilities, other than a boat used to carry passengers for hire is considered to be a private place while the boat is at anchor or is secured to the dock or land.

**DRINKING AGE:** The legal drinking age in Ontario is 19 years old.