Summer is a season that is full of fun outdoor recreation including swimming, boating, exploring the wilderness, barbeques, etc. For some people, alcoholic beverages are included in many of those activities. During the warm summer months it is important to be aware of the possible risks that may result from mixing alcohol with outdoor recreations.

Myths and Facts

MYTH: It is safe to consume alcohol and then go swimming.

FACT: Alcohol impairs judgment and increases risk-taking, a dangerous combination for swimmers. Even experienced swimmers may venture out farther than they should and not be able to make it back to shore, or they may not notice how chilled they are getting and develop hypothermia.

MYTH: It is safer to drive a boat than a car while intoxicated.

FACT: It can be equally, if not more dangerous to drive a boat as it is a car while intoxicated and can be HIGHLY dangerous. Impairment to judgment and reaction time can occur after only two standard drinks of alcohol. A boat operator is likely to become impaired more quickly than a driver on land, drink for drink. That is because the marine environment – motion, vibration, engine noise, sun, wind and spray – accelerates a drinker’s impairment. These stressors cause fatigue that makes a boat operator’s coordination, judgment and reaction time decline even faster when using alcohol.

Summer Safety Tips:

If you make the decision to drink alcohol this summer, keep these things in mind:

- **Stay hydrated.** Drink plenty of non-alcoholic or non-caffeinated beverages, such as water or sports drinks before, during and after.
- **Never swim or be in the water when intoxicated**
- **Always stay with friends and/or family**
- **Never drive a car or boat while Intoxicated**
- **If you take any medication regularly, ask your doctor if you need to be extra cautious when outdoors and in the sun and heat. Some medications make it harder for your body to control its temperature. If you are on two or more medications, you may be at even greater risk for heat-related illness**

Looking for fun things to do in Boston this summer that do not involve alcohol or other drugs? Check out: Hammered.org

The Office of Prevention and Education at Northeastern, (O.P.E.N.) is an available resource for students throughout the entire summer. Please feel free to call/email us for a personalized alcohol check-in.