

## **Why Alcohol Consumption Should Not Be Permitted at Swimming Pools**

The following are some ways that alcohol can affect a person in the water and lead to drowning, injuries, or head, neck or spinal injury:

- Alcohol affects balance. Ordinary actions on steps, ladders, diving boards become hazardous for an intoxicated person.
- Alcohol affects judgement. A person might take an uncharacteristic risk such as diving into shallow water.
- Alcohol slows body movements. It can greatly reduce swimming skills.
- Alcohol is not a rehydrating beverage. It doesn't contain the right nutritional profile to act as a recovery drink after exercise. It amplifies the effects of dehydration causing dizziness, light headed, increased heart rate, causing someone to black out and if in the pool, could possibly sink underwater.
- Alcohol can impair one's ability to supervise and monitor their children which could decrease their safety in and around the pool. Drinkers may become loud, obnoxious, combative and/or abusive to lifeguards. This disrupts the safety and family friendly ambiance at the facility for everyone.

Swimming will not sober up an intoxicated person. The water will not reduce the amount of alcohol in the bloodstream or reduce the effects of alcohol.

Pool patrons who are drinking alcohol (and eating) will typically spend longer time at the pool which will lead to increased incidents.

A common cause of choking includes drinking alcohol before or during meals (Alcohol dulls the nerves that aid swallowing, making choking on food more likely.)

It is unrealistic to expect teenage lifeguards to monitor alcoholic drinking, confront adult patrons who are intoxicated and ask them to leave the facility. Intoxicated persons may become loud and obnoxious, combative and/or abusive to lifeguards. When lifeguards have to deal with unruly patrons, it takes their attention away from their primary duties of monitoring swimmer safety in the water.

Alcoholic drinking at the pools definitely negatively impacts the safe, wholesome family recreational ambiance at the pool.

*Submitted by Park Commissioner Elaine Valdez  
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