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BOATING SAFETY

Those of us who live in Central Texas are lucky enough to live in areas where we can enjoy the water. We have summer options that include Barton Springs, Lake Austin, Lake Travis (at least what's left of it), and even heading to the beach in Port Aransas or South Padre.

But for our firm, the summer water also brings out additional summer dangers, and the most dangerous are the problems we see with boating.

I'm going to try to address that by providing several boating/water safety articles in this edition of the newsletter. I know most of the information that I'll include in here is common sense, but it never hurts to hear it again.

Here is the big overview of what you need to do to make sure your trips are a little safer.

AVOID DRINKING AND BOATING. This should go without saying, but a significant portion of boating accidents involve alcohol. Even worse, being on the water magnifies the risk of alcohol. I've heard that one drink on the water is equal to four drinks on land. I'm not sure that's completely accurate, but it's probably close.

USE YOUR LIGHTS. I have had conversations with members of Austin Lake Police who have indicated that one of the biggest dangers people face is the risk of night time collisions. These risks could be greatly reduced by people using their lights.



WEAR YOUR LIFE VEST. The law requires you to have one life jacket per person on the boat. Most of us take that to mean we keep them in storage. But if something goes wrong, you might not have the opportunity to open your storage compartment and start passing out life jackets. Be safe, and have them handy. Or better yet, you should wear them.

LOOK OUT FOR OTHERS. As the lake crowds increase, make sure you're cognizant of other skiers, tubers, and wakeboarders. And always remember that as you follow them, they could fall in an instant. On the other hand, when you voluntarily stop to get in and out of the water, make sure you're doing so in as safe a place as possible.

- C. Brooks Schuelke

SAFE BOATING: THE STATISTICS — WHY THIS MATTERS

Why do I think these boating tips are important? Here are statistics from the Safe Boating Council, which came from the US Coast Guard's 2012 Recreational Boating Report

- Drowning was reported as the cause of death in almost 3/4 of all water fatalities.
- Approximately 85% of those who drowned were not wearing life jackets.
- In 2012, the Coast Guard counted 4,515 accidents that involved 651 deaths, 2,000 injuries, and approximately \$38 million of damage to property as a result of recreational boating accidents.
- Approximately 14% of the deaths occurred on boats where the operator had received boating safety instruction.
- Operator inattention, operator inexperience, improper lookout, machinery failure and excessive speed are the top five primary contributing factors in accidents.
- Alcohol use is the leading contributing factor in fatal boating accidents; it was listed as the leading factor in 17 percent of boating deaths.
- Twenty-four children under age thirteen lost their lives while boating in 2012. Forty-two percent of the children who died in 2012 did so from drowning.

Unfortunately, Texas is the number 3 state for boating deaths and the number 4 state for boating accidents.

Remember to be safe: Don't let you or your family become another statistic.

Quotes Of The Month

Work is a part of life, not the point of it.

— Sean Adams

Live so that when your children think of fairness and integrity, they think of you.

— H. Jackson Brown

Work is either fun or drudgery. It depends on your attitude. I like fun.

— Colleen Barrett

Nothing you do for your children is wasted. They seem not to notice us, hovering, averting our eyes, and they seldom offer thanks, but what we do for them is never wasted.

— Garrison Keillor

People rarely succeed unless they have fun in what they're doing.

— Dale Carnegie



CHOOSING THE RIGHT LIFE JACKET

It's not enough to have a life jacket. Make sure it's the right life jacket for your size, your activities, and the water conditions you might encounter.

The Safe Boating Council has these guidelines:

Try It On

- Check the manufacturer's ratings for your size and weight.
- Make sure the life jacket is properly zipped and buckled.
- Raise your arms straight up over your head while wearing your life jacket and ask a friend to grasp the tops of the arm openings, gently pulling up. If there is excess room above the openings, and the life jacket rides up over your chin or face, it does NOT fit properly. A snug fit in these areas signals a properly fitting life jacket.

Fit Facts

- It is extremely important that you choose a properly fitting life jacket.
- Life jackets that are too big will cause the flotation device to push up around your face, which could be dangerous.
- Life jackets that are too small will not be able to keep your body afloat.

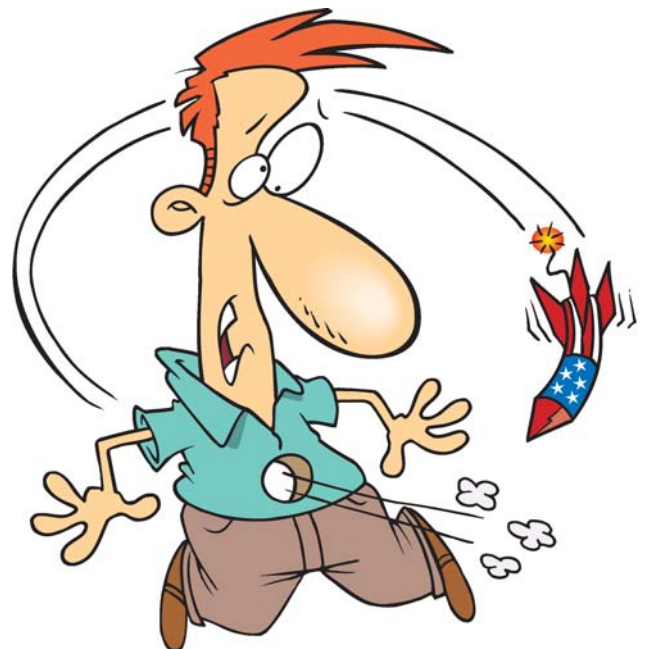
Important Reminders

- Make sure your life jacket is U.S. Coast Guard approved.
- Double check that your life jacket is appropriate for your favorite water activities.
- Take the time to ensure a proper fit.
- Life jackets for adults do not work for kids. Do not buy a life jacket for your child to "grow into."

HAVE A SAFE 4th OF JULY

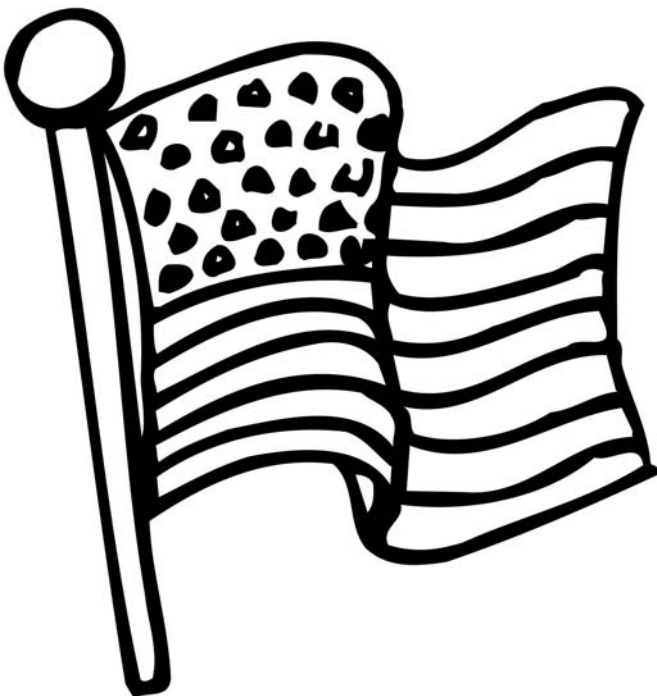
I have traditionally offered information about fireworks safety in my June newsletters. I'm going to spare you a repeat of the same information that I always print. I trust that if you're using fireworks, you'll be safe and you'll supervise your kids to remind them to be safe.

However, the one thing I did want to remind you about is the danger of sparklers. We typically think of sparklers as kids toys that we can let our kids use. BUT SPARKLERS CAN REACH UP TO 2000 DEGREES. Needless to say, that's hot and that's dangerous. When you get the sparklers out this year, make sure you're around while your kids are using them and that the kids use them in a safe manner.



This newsletter is informational and not legal advice. If you need legal advice, feel free to call us to set up a consultation.

Happy Independence Day!



WHAT DO WE DO?

While we're happy to help you find a lawyer in any practice area, I routinely get asked about the types of cases we typically handle. We generally represent clients in two types of cases.

PERSONAL INJURY CASES, including

- Motor vehicle accidents
- Trucking accidents
- Bicycle accidents
- Wrongful death cases
- Workplace injuries
- Construction injuries
- Products liability claims
- Other serious personal injuries

BUSINESS LITIGATION, representing business and business owners in their disputes and lawsuits.

If you, your loved ones, or friends and family members need help in these areas, please recommend us.