

BEACH SAFETY – ALCOHOL & DRUGS



Some people might like to consume a few drinks while enjoying their day at the beach, but it's important to understand that swimming while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs is a recipe for disaster. Alcohol and drugs not only impair your judgement, but also significantly slow your reflexes – a dangerous, and potentially deadly, combination when it comes to the surf.

Alcohol and drugs have contributed to 315 coastal drowning deaths in the last 15 years (2004 - 2019), which accounts for almost one-fifth (19%) of all coastal drowning deaths. Males are over-represented in Australian alcohol and drug-related coastal drowning deaths (86%), while men aged between 25-34 are highlighted to be particularly at risk (20%).

THE AFFECTS OF ALCOHOL & DRUGS

Alcohol and drugs can affect people in different ways. Consuming alcohol and drugs can lead to:

Impaired judgement

- Prompting you to take unnecessary risks, while overrating your ability in the surf
- Adversely impacting your ability to identify and manage dangerous situations

Lack of coordination and reaction time

- It may affect your senses of sight, sound and touch
- It may take you longer to react due to a decrease in brain response and ability to process information

Inability to control temperature

- Overheating may result, due to dehydration and unawareness of sun exposure
- Hypothermia could also result depending on conditions



“ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE IN AUSTRALIA IS WIDESPREAD AND SWIMMING AFTER CONSUMING ALCOHOL IS THE SECOND MOST COMMON HARMFUL RISK AFTER DRINK DRIVING!”


KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

 **86%**
MALE

MALES AGED **16-39**

ACTIVITY


27%
SWIMMING/WADING

87% 
OF ALCOHOL RELATED COASTAL DROWNING DEATHS WERE ABOVE THE LEGAL LIMIT

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017. National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2016: detailed findings. Drug Statistics series no. 31. Cat. no. PHE 214. Canberra: AIHW.