



# North Carolina Boating Accident Lawyer

North Carolina provides many recreational opportunities. In the summertime, North Carolinians and visitors often take to the water. Many seek out whitewater rafting adventures in the western part of the state on the French Broad, Nantahala, Tuckaseegee and other mountain rivers. The lakes in western and Piedmont North Carolina – Hiwassee, Santeelah, Fontana, Nantahala, Chatuge, Jordan, Harris, and Falls lakes, as well as Lake Norman, to name just a few – offer an abundance of opportunities to get out on the water and fish, ski, or just relax with family and friends. Ocean-loving boaters and fishermen are drawn to North Carolina’s Oregon Inlet, the Morehead City-Beaufort-Atlantic Beach

area and the Wilmington-Southport areas. And many take advantage of the beauty of the Roanoke-Chowan, Pamlico-Tar, Neuse and Cape Fear rivers, along with Albemarle and Pamlico sounds.

The fun of the water sometimes makes us forget that whenever boaters are on the water, there is the potential for injury. When we drive, we follow the rules of the road. When we are on the water, we must follow the rules of the water. Failing to do so can result in serious personal injury or even death. If you have been injured in a North Carolina boating accident the personal injury attorneys Martin & Jones will help you receive the compensation you deserve.

## Types of Boating Accidents

While sources of immeasurable enjoyment, boats can be dangerous. Each person operating a boat – regardless of size, speed, or power – has a duty to act with reasonable care. This includes all manner of watercraft. Some of the more familiar types of boating accidents involve:

- Jet skis
- Wave runners (known as personal water crafts or PWCs)
- Ski boats
- Pontoon boats
- Fishing boats
- Sailboats

Along with being injured while riding in a boat, victims of boating accidents can also be found on the water, under the water, and even flying above the water. For example, boating accidents can result in injuries in people who are:

- Scuba diving
- Parasailing
- Snorkeling
- Waterskiing
- Wakeboarding

## North Carolina Boating Accidents Law

In North Carolina, boaters will often run across Wildlife Enforcement Officers patrolling the waterways. These officers are looking for people who may be operating their boats in a dangerous manner. Unlike law enforcement officials who operate on land, water officers can stop a boat at any time without having to show probable cause that the operator or passengers were violating the law. A Wildlife Enforcement Officer can legally stop a vessel for a “safety inspection” to confirm that the boat is carrying the correct number of life vests and other emergency equipment. Boaters may also be stopped if their vessel is not properly registered or licensed. Similarly, a boater may be stopped if they're not following properly posted navigation aids such as “no wake zone” signs or channel markers.

The North Carolina Rules for Boating have recently changed, and now require all operators under the age of 26 to complete a boating safety course. The course locations can be located online at [www.ncwildlife.org](http://www.ncwildlife.org).

## Types of Boat and Watercraft Accidents

Regardless of whether they have been cited for breaking North Carolina boating laws, water vehicle operators are expected to understand the rules of boating and to operate their watercraft safely. For example, one primary water rule is to always go right when a watercraft approaches directly toward your vessel. If you are uncertain, slow the watercraft by easing off of the throttle. Failure to follow this simple rule can result in an accident.

Some of the most common types of boating accidents are:

- Boats colliding with other boats.
- Boats colliding with fixed objects
- Boats running aground

Many watercraft accidents are avoidable. Some of the most common causes of boating accidents in North Carolina are:

- Boating under the influence of alcohol or drugs (BUI). Impaired boating is a nationwide problem, causing numerous serious accidents on the nation’s waterways each year. North Carolina passed Sheyenne's Law a few years ago, making BUI a felony where serious injury or [death occurs](#). An individual who causes a boating accident while impaired – regardless of the type of vehicle he or she was operating – can be held liable for the damages they cause as a result of their alcohol or drug intoxication.
- **Distracted boating.** Operating a boat while distracted causes more accidents in the Carolinas than BUI. It is the vessel operator’s duty to pay attention to make sure their attention is not overtaken by distractions – such as other people on the boat, noise, wind, waves, and weather – that interfere with safe boating.

- **Improper watercraft operations.** Many recreational users cause collisions, particularly with PWCs, because of a lack of understanding of how a watercraft operates. A PWC can only be steered when the throttle is engaged. Since there is no rudder on a PWC you cannot change directions unless you also give the vehicle the gas. There are no brakes on a PWC.
- **Speeding while boating.** Whether or not a boat is being driven at a safe speed depends on a number of factors, such as visibility, wind conditions, currents, and traffic density. Driving a boat too fast for conditions can cause serious accidents and injuries.

## How a North Carolina Boating Accident Attorney Can Help

If you or a loved one has been injured in a North Carolina boating accident, you may be able to recover compensation. The experienced boating accident attorneys at Martin & Jones will explain your options, guide you through the claims process and handle the legal details of your case so you can concentrate on your recovery.

[Contact us](#) online or call our office at [800-662-1234](tel:800-662-1234) today for a free consultation. Injury claims are handled on a contingency fee basis. We have offices in [Raleigh](#), [Durham](#), and [Wilmington](#).