

Alcohol

All participants in ASTO events must be aware of the law regarding alcohol and drugs at sea.

ASTO recommends that vessels have an Alcohol and Drugs policy and make their staff, volunteers and crew aware of it. The guidance below may be helpful.

Please note that alcohol limits have recently been lowered to fall into line with the STCW code.

Recommendation: No-one should drink any alcohol within 8 hours of sailing.

The Law - on board

It is a *criminal offence* for certain people on board to be:

- a) unable to carry out their duties due to alcohol or drugs (i.e. the under the influence offence) and / or
- b) over the prescribed limit

This applies at all times to the Skipper of the vessel both at sea and in harbour, and whether the crew are on board or not.

It also applies to all professional and volunteer sea staff both at sea and in harbour when there are crew on board (because all have safety responsibilities in the event of emergencies such as a fire on board). When in harbour without crew (voyage turnarounds, maintenance days, etc.) the person in charge must allocate emergency duties to certain individuals who will then be subject to the same legislation.

The legislation also applies to any person who is exercising a function in connection with navigation. This may well mean a member of crew or group leader who is on watch falls within the Act and could be committing a criminal offence if they exceed the alcohol limits.

Ashore

Anyone aged 16 or 17 on licensed premises may only drink beer, wine, or cider **with a meal**. There are no meals provided at the crew party.

It is against the law for an adult to buy or attempt to buy alcohol on behalf of someone under 18.

While it is not illegal for someone under 18 to drink on private premises, please remember that Small Ships Races are youth events and are publicised as a positive activity for young people. Harbours and Marinas very generously support the running of these events and may not do so in future if they feel there is a problem with alcohol consumption.

Harbour masters, etc. are authorised to detain anyone suspected of committing an offence and the police have powers of arrest, right of entry and to take breath or drug tests. Conviction carries a fine and/or imprisonment for up to 2 years.

Table of alcohol limits

The UK blood alcohol limit of 0.05% and alcohol in the breath limit of 0.25mg/l is set by Part 4 of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003, **amended 2015** and is now **stricter than that for drink-driving in the UK**. Testing is currently done by the police, using the same equipment and protocols as for drink drivers.

GUIDANCE

For guidance purposes: it may only take 3 units in 4 hours to exceed the UK limit. It is generally accepted that after drinking 1 unit of alcohol, 1 hour of abstinence is required to clear the body of the effects of this amount of alcohol.

1 Unit is approximately	30cl can of ordinary strength beer/lager	3cl measure of spirits	A 10cl glass of table wine	A 6cl glass of sherry or fortified wine
	(A pint of ordinary strength beer/lager is equivalent to 2 units)		(A litre bottle is equivalent to 10 units)	(A litre bottle is equivalent to 16 units)
	(A 30cl can of <i>extra</i> strength beer/lager is equivalent to 2.5 units)			