

7.8(a) BOATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE MANSLAUGHTER

§§327.35(3)(a), (3)(b), and (3)(c)3., Fla. Stat.

To prove the crime of Boating under the Influence Manslaughter, the State must prove the following three elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

- 1. (Defendant) operated a vessel.**
- 2. While operating the vessel, (defendant)**

Give 2a or 2b or both as applicable.

- a. was under the influence of [alcoholic beverages] [a chemical substance] [a controlled substance] to the extent that [his] [her] normal faculties were impaired.**
 - b. had a [blood] [breath]-alcohol level of .08 or more grams of alcohol per [100 milliliters of blood] [210 liters of breath].**
- 3. As a result of operating the vessel, (defendant) caused or contributed to the cause of the death of [(victim)] [an unborn child].**

Give if § 327.35(3)(a), (3)(b), and (3)(c)3.b., Fla. Stat., is charged.

If you find the defendant guilty of Boating under the Influence Manslaughter, you must further determine whether the State proved beyond a reasonable doubt that:

(Defendant), at the time of the accident,

- a. knew or should have known that the accident occurred**
and
- b. failed to give information as required by law**
and
- c. failed to render aid as required by law.**

Florida law requires that the operator of a vessel involved in a collision, accident, or other casualty, to render to other persons affected by the collision, accident, or other casualty such assistance as is practicable and necessary in order to save them from or minimize any danger caused by the collision,

accident, or other casualty, so far as [he] [she] can do so without serious danger to the operators own vessel, crew, and passengers.

Florida law also requires the operator to give [his] [her] name, address, and identification of [his] [her] vessel in writing to any person injured and to the owner of any property damaged in the collision, accident, or other casualty.

In cases of collision, accident, or other casualty resulting in death or medical treatment beyond immediate first aid, Florida law requires that the operator, without delay and by the quickest means available, give notice of the accident to one of the following agencies: the Division of Law Enforcement of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; the sheriff of the county within which the accident occurred; or the police chief of the municipality within which the accident occurred.

Give if applicable. § 327.35(4), Fla. Stat.

If you find the defendant guilty of Boating under the Influence Manslaughter, you must also determine whether the State has proven beyond a reasonable doubt whether:

- a. the defendant had a [blood] [breath]-alcohol level of . 15 or higher while operating the vessel.**
- b. the defendant was accompanied in the vessel by a person under the age of 18 years at the time of the Boating under the Influence.**

State v. Davis, 110 So. 3d 27 (Fla. 2d DCA 2013).

“Vessel” means a boat and includes every description of watercraft, barge, and airboat, other than a seaplane, on the water used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water.

§ 327.354, Fla. Stat.

“Normal faculties” include but are not limited to the ability to see, hear, walk, talk, judge distances, operate a vessel, make judgments, act in emergencies and, in general, to normally perform the many mental and physical acts of our daily lives.

§ 327.02, Fla. Stat.

“Operate” means to be in charge of or in command of or in actual physical control of a vessel upon the waters of this state, or to exercise control over or to have responsibility for a vessels navigation or safety while the vessel is underway upon the waters of this state, or to control or steer a vessel being towed by another vessel upon the waters of the state.

Shaw v. State, 783 So. 2d 1097 (Fla. 5th DCA 2001).

Impaired means diminished in some material respect.

§ 322.01, Fla. Stat.

“Alcoholic beverages” are considered to be substances of any kind and description which contain alcohol.

() is a controlled substance under Florida law. Ch. 893, Fla. Stat.

() is a chemical substance under Florida law. § 877.111, Fla. Stat.

§ 775.021(5), Fla. Stat.

An “unborn child” means a member of the species *Homo sapiens*, at any stage of development, and who is carried in the womb.

Give if applicable. § 775.021(5)(b), Fla. Stat.

Boating Under the Influence Manslaughter does not require the State to prove that the defendant knew or should have known that (victim) was pregnant or that the defendant intended to cause the death of the unborn child.

Give if appropriate. § 327.354(2)(a) and (2)(b), Fla. Stat.

- 1. If you find from the evidence that while operating or in actual physical control of the vessel, the defendant had a [blood] [breath]-alcohol level of .05 or less, you shall presume that the defendant was not under the influence of alcoholic beverages to the extent that [his] [her] normal faculties were impaired; but this presumption may be overcome by other evidence demonstrating that the defendant was under the influence of alcoholic beverages to the extent that [his] [her] normal faculties were impaired.**
- 2. If you find from the evidence that while operating or in actual physical control of the vessel, the defendant had a [blood] [breath]-alcohol level in excess of .05 but less than .08, that fact does not give rise to any presumption that the defendant was or was not under the influence of alcoholic beverages to the extent that [his]**

[her] normal faculties were impaired. In such cases, you may consider that evidence along with other evidence in determining whether the defendant was under the influence of alcoholic beverages to the extent that [his] [her] normal faculties were impaired.

It is not necessary to instruct on the “prima facie evidence of impairment” in § 327.354(2)(c), Fla. Stat., if the State charged the defendant with boating with a blood or breath-alcohol level of .08 or over. In those cases, if the jury finds that the defendant operated a vessel with an unlawful blood or breath-alcohol level, impairment becomes moot. Tyner v. State, 805 So. 2d 862 (Fla. 2d DCA 2001).

Give only if appropriate. State v. Burns, 661 So.2d 842 (Fla. 5th DCA 1995); Kurecka v. State, 67 So.3d 1052 (Fla. 4th DCA 2010).

A person [arrested] [being investigated] for Boating Under the Influence does not have the right to consult with an attorney before deciding whether to submit to a [breath] [urine] [blood] test.

Give only if appropriate

A person [arrested] [being investigated] for Boating Under the Influence does not have the right to consult with an attorney before deciding whether to submit to a [breath] [urine] [blood] test. However, if the defense maintains that the defendant mistakenly believed that [he] [she] did have such a right and refused to provide a [breath] [blood] [urine] sample because of that mistaken belief, you may consider that claim, as well as the state’s competing claim that the defendant’s refusal shows that [he] [she] did not want the police to obtain evidence regarding [his] [her] [[breath] [blood] alcohol level] [or] [drug consumption].

Defense of inoperability; give if applicable.

It is a defense to the charge of Boating under the Influence Manslaughter if the vessel was inoperable at the time of the alleged offense, unless the defendant was controlling or steering the vessel while it was being towed by another vessel upon the waters of the state. However, it is not a defense if the defendant was boating under the influence before the vessel became inoperable.

Lesser Included Offenses

**BOATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE MANSLAUGHTER —
327.35(3)(a), (3)(b), AND (3)(c)3.**

CATEGORY ONE	CATEGORY TWO	FLA. STAT.	INS. NO.
Boating under the influence		327.35	28.14
	Boating under the influence causing serious bodily injury	327.35(3)(a), (3)(b), and (3)(c)2.	28.17
	Boating under the influence causing damage to person or property	327.35(3)(a), (3)(b), and (3)(c)1.	28.15

Comments

Effective October 1, 2025, § 327.35(3), Fla. Stat, makes BUI Manslaughter a first degree felony when the defendant had a prior qualifying conviction. Because the fact of the prior qualifying conviction is purely a recidivist factor, the Committee on Standard Jury Instructions in Criminal Cases did not create an instruction for the jury to find the existence of the prior qualifying conviction. However, the courts may treat this enhancement as an element that must be proven to the jury under the beyond a reasonable doubt standard in a bifurcated proceeding. If so, a special instruction would be needed. The judge and the parties can look toward the end of standard instruction #28.2 for some language for a special instruction for the bifurcated proceeding.

This instruction was adopted in 2009 [6 So. 3d 574] and amended in 2016 [190 So. 3d 1055], 2017 [211 So. 3d 995], and on June 12, 2026.