

## 2010 Minnesota Boating Accident and Drowning Summary Year-End

Prepared by the Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources  
Boat & Water Safety Section

Summary of Accidents – Compared to Prior Years										
Accident Category & Year	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
Boating Fatalities <sup>1</sup>	12	15	12	15	14	23	15	17	30	16
Non-Fatal Boating Accidents <i>See NOTES on page 2</i>	71	72	77	113	102	93	73	94	135	129
Non-Boating Drownings	32	28	33	26	49	45	30	32	42	53
Record Summary										
1. Boating Deaths a) Highest: 57 in both 1961 & 1969, b) Lowest: 12 in 2010, 2008 and 1996										
2. Non-Fatal Boating Accidents a) Highest: 190 in 1989 b) Lowest: 71 in 2010 & 1974										
3. Non-Boating Drownings a) Highest: 92 in 1969, b) Lowest: 26 in 2007										

### Boating Fatalities

1. 5/2 – Lake of the Woods Co. – Lake of the Woods – The sheriff's office received a call around 8:45 am of a possible drowning near Flag Island. Three citizens found a 27-year-old woman, from nearby Ontario, floating face down in the 50-degree water around 8:30 am, pulled her from the water and then administered CPR. She was witnessed operating her 16-foot / 40hp boat alone near Oak Island, and it appeared to be operating roughly. Witnesses thought there were possibly problems with the boat's trim since it appeared to be porpoising. A short time later, she was then apparently ejected or fell from her boat. The unoccupied craft was still running in circles near the area where she was found floating. When sheriff's deputies arrived, she was transported to Young's Bay where she was pronounced dead. *(Life jacket worn – No)*
2. 7/31 – Houston Co. – Mississippi River – a 27-year-old Onalaska, WI man died after falling off a wake board directly in the path of a towboat & barges headed upstream on the river. He fell off about 5:45 pm, just north of Brownsville, while being towed by an 18-foot motorboat. The recreational boat operator did not notice the towboat & barges until it was too late to pick-up the victim, now in front of the tow's path. The towboat operator saw the victim in the water, and the boat that was towing him, and took a number of actions to try and avoid hitting him. The operator lost sight of the victim as they got closer. The man, who was wearing life jacket, apparently went under the bow of a lead barge. A call to 911 was placed from a nearby marina and numerous agencies responded. The victim was found around 10:30 pm after a tug was brought in to separate the barges. He was found between two of them, still wearing his life jacket. *(Life jacket worn – Yes – by victim)*
3. 8/6 – Itasca Co. – Deer Lake – a 22-year-old Buffalo man drowned, after his kayak apparently capsized around 3:30 pm. Search operations ensued that day and were called off in the evening . They resumed at 6:30 am on the 7<sup>th</sup>. A side-scan sonar unit was used to assist in the search operation. After first locating the body on sonar, divers then recovered it in 60 feet of water, about 1,500 feet from shore, around 5:50 pm on the 7<sup>th</sup>. *(Life jacket worn – No)*
4. 8/6 – Cass Co. – Ten-Mile Lake – an 18-year-old Laporte man drowned after his 14-foot open aluminum 9 hp outboard motorboat collided with a 21-foot fiberglass stern-drive boat. This resulted in the victim being ejected overboard just before midnight on the 6<sup>th</sup>. Divers recovered his body in 20 feet of water about 1:30 am on the 7<sup>th</sup>. *(Life jacket worn – No)*
5. 8/18 – Washington Co. – Big Marine Lake – a 64-year-old Lindstrom man drowned while fishing after falling or being ejected from his 16-foot, 40 hp aluminum boat around 7:30 pm. The boat then proceeded to travel in circles. A nearby boater made the call for assistance, and was also able jump in the unoccupied craft and stop it. He then held it in place until first responders arrived. A search operation was started using divers, dragging, side-scan sonar and an underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV). Recovery assistance was provided by three other counties, DNR officers and the State Patrol. Recovery operations continued through 8/20, when the side-scan sonar indicated a potential target around 3 pm. The ROV was then launched and confirmed it was the victim. The victim was recovered by divers just before 4 pm. *(Life jacket worn – No)*
6. 9/24 – St. Louis Co. – Birch Lake - a 51-year-old man drowned after falling overboard from a small boat, near the houseboat where he was staying. He was attempting to move his fishing boat to the stern of the houseboat, when the back of the seat broke off and he landed in the water around 12:40 pm. The sheriff's office received the emergency call around 12:45 pm, and he was recovered at 1:50 pm. *(Life jacket worn – No)*

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**Boating Fatalities – Contd.**

7. 9/25 – Cass Co. – Stony Lake - a 73-year-old St. Cloud man, who was fishing from his 14-foot, 15 hp boat, apparently fell overboard sometime during the morning. A citizen spotted the body in the water around noon and the sheriff's office recovered it at 12:30 pm. Further information awaits the autopsy results. *(Life jacket worn – No)*
8. 9/28-29 – Itasca Co. – First River - a 73-year-old Grand Rapids man, went out alone in a 15-foot outboard boat to scout duck hunting spots in the afternoon of the 28<sup>th</sup>. He capsized his boat at some unknown time. Apparently when he capsized, he grabbed for the motor and his right arm was pinned between the boat and the motor – holding him in the water, but able to breathe. He was reported missing at 12:55 am on the 29<sup>th</sup> and was recovered around 2:30 am that same day. *(Life jacket worn – Yes)*
9. 10/2 – Kanabec Co. - Devils Lake - a 20-year-old Arkansas man apparently drowned after the paddle boat he and two other men were on, sank around 3:30 pm. The victim attempted to swim to shore, but went under about 15 feet from the craft. The other two men were pulled from the water by persons on shore. The first call for help was around 4 pm and search operations continued until 10:30 pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. They resumed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> around 6 am and the victim was recovered around 11 am. *(Life jacket worn – No)*
- 10-11. 10/24 – Itasca Co. – Ball Club Lake – an 84-year-old man and his 51-year-old son, both from Deer River, drowned after capsizing their 16-foot aluminum boat with a 25-horsepower outboard. The two were netting whitefish on the lake and were reported missing around 4:15pm on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Their bodies were recovered in 6 feet of water just after 5:30 pm that same day. Both victims were found tangled in the nets. One victim was wearing chest waders. Water temperature was 51 degrees. *(Life jackets worn – No)*
12. 11/02 – St. Louis Co. – Briar Lake – a 61-year old Duluth man apparently drowned after somehow entering the water from his canoe. He was reported overdue from a canoe trip around 7:25pm and his vehicle was found at the access by responders. His body was located at 10:25 pm the same day. *(Life jacket worn – No)*

**Non-Fatal Boating Accidents** See NOTES

Capsizing	9
Collision w / fixed/floating object	5
Collision w / another watercraft	23
Collision w / underwater object	0
Collision w/ swimmer	1
Fall in boat	2
Fall overboard	3
Fire/Explosion	5
Grounding / Hitting Bottom	3
Struck by Propeller	0
Sinking / Flooding / Swamping	3
Water skiing, wake boarding or tubing	13
Other	4
<b>Total Non-Fatal Boating Accidents</b>	<b>71</b>

NOTES:

1. Reportable non-fatal boating accidents are those where there was: a) at least \$2,000 in property damage, or b) an injury beyond first aid.
2. There is usually a delay in the reporting of non-fatal boating accidents.
3. Reportability threshold for property damage was raised from \$500 to \$2,000 effective in 2003 to match Coast Guard standard.

**Non- Boating Drownings**

1. 2/5 – Washington Co. – St. Croix River – a 28-year-old St. Croix Beach man operating his snowmobile apparently ran his sled into open water near Afton around 6:30 pm. A witness on the Wisconsin shore heard him enter the water and then cries for help. Search and rescue resources responded from both sides of the river, including the Washington County Sheriff's airboat and the State Patrol helicopter. A helmet was spotted by the helicopter and retrieved by the airboat. Extensive searching, with assistance of side-scan sonar and a remote-controlled underwater vehicle, continued in the area where the tracks entered the water and where the helmet was found. Nothing was found and the active search was called off at 2 am. The next day the side-scan search continued on the 80 acres of open water. The snowmobile was found and location marked. Unfortunately, the extensive search of the open water turned up nothing. *The body finally surfaced in the same area on 8-12-12.*
2. 4/11 – Redwood Co. - Rice Creek – a 22-year-old Bird Island man drowned in the creek as he was trying to retrieve items from a submerged truck. He was reported missing on the evening of April 11<sup>th</sup>. A month before, he and two other persons were rescued from the top of the truck, that had somehow entered the high water and floated about 150 feet downstream. His body was recovered by a dive team around 12:30 pm on April 13<sup>th</sup> about 50 feet downstream from the truck and in six feet of water.

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### Non- Boating Drownings – contd.

3. 5/2 – Douglas Co. – Hotel Hot Tub – a 6-year old Carlos, MN girl apparently drowned in an Alexandria hotel sometime after 5 pm. A bystander saw her in the hot tub needing help, and pulled her off the bottom (2.5 feet of water). Others in the pool area performed CPR. Police arrived at 5:20 pm and she was taken to Douglas County Hospital where she was pronounced dead.
4. 5/23 – Hennepin Co. – Outdoor residential hot tub – a 35-year-old Minneapolis man drowned in the tub located at a residence in Orono. The victim was found in the tub around 7 am, pulled out, CPR started and 911 called. Resuscitation attempts by the paramedics were in vain and he was pronounced dead.
5. 5/24 – Martin Co. – Sisseton Lake – a 16-year-old Elmore boy died in a Rochester hospital after being recovered from the lake around 6:55 pm. He and a friend swam out to a buoy and on the way back he went under about half way to a floating dock – around 6 pm. His companion tried to save him, but to no avail. Others on shore tried to search for him and 911 was called just after 6 pm. A search boat was on the lake shortly thereafter. After recovery, he was taken by ambulance to the emergency room of the hospital in Fairmont and then airlifted to Rochester.
6. 5/26 – Crow Wing Co. – S. Long Lake – an 81-year-old Brainerd man apparently fell down the steps at his residence, and then into the lake near his dock, just before 6 pm.
7. 5/27 – Anoka Co. – Backyard Pool – a 17-month-old Andover girl died after being pulled out of a backyard swimming pool, not breathing. She was discovered underwater in the pool in the early evening of the 27<sup>th</sup>. Help was summoned and arrived about 8:10 pm, CPR was administered, and she was then taken to a hospital. She died in the hospital in the morning of May 28<sup>th</sup>.
8. 5/29 – Sherburne Co. – Lake Orono – a 7-year-old Dayton girl died four days after being pulled from this lake in Elk River. She was at the beach with her family and was playing with other children. She fell off an inflatable raft into four feet of water around 6:25 pm. Her father noticed she had disappeared, and then he entered the water to try and save her. It took two to three minutes until he was able to find her. He rushed her to shore with help from others and CPR was started. Help was summoned at 6:28 pm. She was then taken to a Robbinsdale hospital where she died in the morning of June 3<sup>rd</sup>.
9. 6/25 – Hennepin Co. – Indoor Pool – a 90-year-old Crystal woman apparently drowned in a senior living center pool early in the morning while swimming or doing water aerobics. A maintenance worker found her floating face-up and unconscious around 5:45 am. He called for help. The responders tried to revive the victim, but they could not, and she was pronounced dead shortly after 7 am.
10. 6/27 – Cass Co. – Spider Lake – a 64-year-old Kensett, Iowa man drowned after falling off a dock in waist deep water while fishing with one of his grandchildren shortly after 10 am. Help was summoned at 10:13 am, he was pulled from the water by one person and CPR was initiated by a nurse and doctor, who just happened to be on shore. EMS arrived and took over. They transported him to the ambulance to meet a medivac helicopter. Unfortunately he passed away just after 11 am.
11. 6/28 – Hennepin Co. – Miss. River – the body of a 35-year-old Minneapolis woman was spotted around 12:40 pm on the up-river side of the Lower St. Anthony Lock & Dam in Mpls. Her body was recovered at 2:30 pm the same day. She apparently had gone swimming and had been missing for a week
12. 7/2 – Hennepin Co. – Lake Calhoun – a 29-year-old Brooklyn Center man was swimming at a public beach when he went under around 9:10 pm. Help was summoned and he was recovered about 9:30 pm in six feet of water. Fire and EMS personnel performed CPR on the victim, but he was pronounced dead just before 10 pm at a Minneapolis hospital.
13. 7/9 – Crow Wing Co. - Bay Lake – a 59-year-old Minneapolis man drowned while swimming near his pontoon boat. He apparently went under around 2:30 pm and was reported missing at 3:35 pm. His body was recovered in 50 feet of water just before 10 am on July 13<sup>th</sup>, using cadaver dogs, sonar and divers.
14. 7/10 – Morrison Co. – Platte River – a 19-year-old Little Falls man was wading with two other men below the dam when he stepped into a drop-off area and was swept away by the current around 8 pm. Help was summoned and he was recovered in 13 feet of water by divers, about 40 minutes after he went under. Resuscitation was tried, but with no success.

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## Non- Boating Drownings – contd.

15. 7/11 – Red Lake Co. – Clearwater & Red Lake Rivers – a 22-year-old Warroad man drowned while swimming with friends at 4:05 pm. He was attempting to swim and went too far out. He went under about 125 yards out and in the river current. Others there attempted to get to him, but to no avail. Someone called 911 at 4:12 pm and a deputy, rescue squad and firefighters arrived on the scene. Search operations began at 4:28 pm and the search continued. He was eventually found by one of the search teams at 4:55 pm in eight feet of water, about five feet from where he went down. He was brought ashore and pronounced dead at 5:05 pm.
16. 7/16 – Hennepin Co. – Lake of the Isles – a 26-year-old Minneapolis man drowned while swimming with friends just before 6 am. He told his companions that he was going to swim back to shore. When they reached shore, however, he was not to be found. Help was summoned and his body was recovered by divers in seven feet of water about 60 yards from the shore around 9:40 am.
17. 7/23 – Blue Earth Co. – Minnesota / Blue Earth Rivers – A 32-year-old St. Paul man drowned while wading in a pool of murky water connected to the two rivers in Land of Memories Park. The accident occurred in area known as the hole where there was a current. He apparently stepped into a drop-off and went down about 8:30 pm. A family member began looking for him and a call was made to 911 at 8:42 pm. Rescuers arrived about three minutes later and shortly thereafter, relatives pulled the victim from eight feet of water. He was submerged for about 15 minutes. CPR was started by law enforcement personnel until EMS took over and rushed him to a Mankato hospital, where he was declared dead.
18. 7/26 – Hennepin Co. – Lake Nokomis – A 19-year-old Monticello man disappeared after falling off a fishing pier around 3 pm. He was last seen sitting on the railing, when others on the dock heard a splash. They summoned help and two persons were able to pull him out of 8-10 feet of water after about 14 minutes. Resuscitation was started and the man was transported to a Minneapolis hospital. He was pronounced dead on the evening of 7/28.
19. 8/1 – Crow Wing Co. – Pelican Lake – a 26-year-old Richfield man apparently drowned after somehow entering the lake near a resort dock. He had been at the bar and was last seen around 2:20 am. He was reported missing around 12:45 pm the same day, and his body was found floating under the dock about 6:30 pm.
20. 8/10 – Chisago Co. – Fish Lake – a 14-year-old Webster, Wisconsin boy was swimming with family and friends at the Fish Lake Beach when he submerged round 3:20 pm near the swim raft. Help was summoned and he was pulled from 9-10 feet of water at around 3:30 pm. CPR was started and he was airlifted to a St. Paul hospital where died in the evening of August 22<sup>nd</sup>.
21. 8/11 – Hubbard Co. – Lower Bottle Lake – a 75-year-old Willmar man drowned when he fell off his boat lift and into the lake around 7:30 pm. A call for help was placed at 7:38 pm. His wife and neighbor tried to resuscitate him. First responders took over, but to no avail.
- 22-23. 8/22 – Red Lake Co. – Red Lake River – Two men, each on float tubes apparently drowned just around 6:20 pm, after somehow leaving their tubes to retrieve items that had spilled into the river. The sheriff's office was called at 6:27 pm and a search operation was started. The body of the 28-year-old man from East Grand Forks was recovered in 9 feet of water just north of the Co. Hwy 13 bridge at 11:45 pm. The second victim, a 24-year-old man from Grand Forks, was recovered closer to the bridge at 1:00 am on the 23<sup>rd</sup>
24. 8/22 – Hennepin Co. – Residential Pool - a 59-year-old Bloomington man drowned while swimming in a backyard pool. He was helping an 11-year old boy swim in the deep end. The 11-year old had problems and the child's mother pulled him out. The victim was then spotted on the bottom and was pulled out of the pool. CPR was initiated and help was summoned around 9:45 pm. Paramedics and police officers continued resuscitation for 40 minutes upon arrival, but were not able to save him. He was pronounced dead around 10:30 pm
25. 8/28 – Cass Co. - Gull River – a 55-year-old Albertville man apparently drowned after somehow entering the river on foot during the very early morning of 8/28. Around 3:30pm on the 28<sup>th</sup> he was reported missing. Deputies searched the area and found his body at 4:45 pm in the river approximately 150 feet from shore in 3 feet of water.
26. 9/9 – Washington Co. – Square Lake – a 59-year-old Minneapolis woman drowned while practicing surface navigation skills with other scuba divers around 4 pm. Someone noticed she was not moving, had rolled over and was sinking below the surface. Another diver was able to get her back up to the surface from about 10-12 feet of water by inflating her buoyancy compensator (BC) and then getting her to shore. Upon reaching shore, CPR was initiated. Help arrived around 4:15 pm and an automatic external defibrillator (AED) was hooked up. CPR was continued by EMS personnel without any results, and she was pronounced dead at 4:53 pm.
27. 9/29 – Benton Co. - Indoor Pool - a 52-year-old St. Cloud man drowned in a hotel pool. He was in an adjacent hot tub. At 7:09 pm he got out of the tub and dove head first into the area of the pool that was five feet deep. He was underwater about three minutes before being pulled out by a witness. Resuscitation attempts failed and he was pronounced dead at the hospital.

### Non- Boating Drownings – contd.

28. Unknown Date – Ramsey Co. - Miss. River. – On 10/14 a body was found in the branches and debris in the river, near the High Bridge. The body, an unidentified 20-40 year old woman, was recovered and it was determined that she drowned. *No specific information on the identity of victim, or the circumstances of the incident, has been determined as of date of this summary.*
29. 11/6 – Hennepin Co. – Indoor Water Park - a 17-year-old boy from Champlin was found in 8-1/2 feet of water at the bottom of the pool, where the three-story water slide ends. He was pulled from the water around 4:55pm, CPR was started and help was summoned around 5 pm to the facility, located in Brooklyn Park. The victim had been at the pool swimming and going down the water slides about a half hour before being found on the bottom. The victim was rushed to a Robbinsdale hospital, where he was pronounced dead at 5:45pm
30. 11/7 – Otter Tail Co. – Devils Lake - a 59 year-old Perham drowned as he was apparently working in the water and lakeshore in front of his residence. He was spotted by his sister in four feet of water and she called for help about 4 pm. He was pronounced dead at the scene.
31. 12/2 – LeSueur Co. – Lake Washington – an 81-year-old Madison Lake man drowned after driving on the lake with his ATV and then breaking through the ice while on foot. Help was summoned at 3:11 pm after neighbors heard calls for help. The victim then went under water just before 3:30pm. First responders arrived on the lake and a dive team entered the water at 3:55 pm and immediately found the victim in 12 feet of water. He was pulled out and resuscitation was started, as he was taken to shore and then airlifted to a Rochester hospital, where he was pronounced dead.
32. 12/4 – Morrison Co. – Lake Alexander - a 59-year-old Cushing man drowned after breaking through the ice between 5:30 - 6pm while riding his ATV. The sheriff's office received a call at 6:10 pm of an ATV possibly breaking through the ice. In addition to the sheriff's office, a number of agencies also responded to the scene. At 8:22 pm, rescuers spotted the victim face down in the water at the edge of a 20-foot area of open water. He was pulled from the water and pronounced dead at the scene.