

## 2016 Minnesota Boating Accident and Drowning Summary

Prepared by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Boat and Water Safety –  
as of 9/20/17

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### Summary of Accidents – Compared to Prior Years

Accident Category and Year	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
<b>Boating Fatalities</b>	18*	18	14	12	15	16	12	15	12	15
<b>Non-Fatal Boating Accidents</b>	79	71	36	65	72	61	71	70	77	113
<b>Non-Boating Drownings</b>	40	35	29	30	40	50	34	28	33	26

\*There was also one commercial boating fatality which is not counted by MN DNR or the U. S. Coast Guard as a recreational boating fatality.

### 2016 Statewide Summaries

#### Boating Fatalities

- 4/11 – Lake of the Woods Co. – Rainy River – A 52-year-old Shoreview man drowned after his motorized 14-foot boat apparently capsized. He was found floating in the river about 11:30 a.m. He was unresponsive when authorities recovered him by boat and CPR was started. He was transported to the hospital where he was pronounced dead. A search was started for his missing boat. It was found submerged in about 24 feet of water on 4/13. The incident was unwitnessed, but weather conditions may have been a factor. *(Life jacket worn – yes)*
- 4/30 – Ramsey Co. – Mississippi River – Authorities have recovered the body of a missing 28-year-old Lakeville man who fell overboard from a 16-foot motorboat while fishing with a friend on the river early on the morning of 4/30/16. The victim was doing something with the anchor when he fell overboard. The friend called the authorities for help at about 12:48 a.m. The man’s body was recovered on 5/16/16. *(Life jacket worn – no)*
- 5/3 – Koochiching Co. – Rainy River – A 63-year-old Birchdale man drowned after apparently falling overboard from his 15-foot motorboat. He had gone fishing with his dog. A friend found the dog on shore and called authorities. A search was started and the overturned boat was discovered along shore. The man’s body was discovered floating about a half-mile from the boat. The incident was unwitnessed. *(Life jacket worn – no)*
- 5/22 – Hennepin Co. – Lake Minnetonka – A 46-year-old Minneapolis man drowned after jumping off a moving 25-foot pontoon boat about 7:22 p.m. The operator brought the boat around to retrieve the man, but he was unresponsive in the water. The boat passengers got him out of the water and onto the boat. They called 911 and started CPR while they brought him to shore. Emergency responders continued CPR to no avail. He died on scene. *(Life jacket worn – no)*
- 5/28 – Murray Co. – Lake Shetek – A 50-year-old Slayton man drowned after he fell overboard from his 22-foot pontoon boat. He was last seen late Saturday night (5/28) and was reported missing about 24 hours later. His boat was located early in the morning on Monday (5/30). His body was recovered on Monday at about 1:35 p.m. *(Life jacket worn – no)*

6. 6/11 – Douglas Co. – Lake Miltona – A 55-year-old Miltona man drowned after falling out of his 18½-foot motorboat at about 4:35 p.m. He had asked the passenger to take the controls while he went to the back of the boat. The passenger turned the operator's seat and the armrest hit the throttle, causing the boat to lunge forward. The victim was thrown overboard. Life jackets were thrown to him, but he couldn't reach them. He went under water and did not resurface. His body was recovered about 5:47 p.m. *(Life jacket worn – no)*
7. 6/18 – Fillmore Co. – Root River – A 63-year-old Minneapolis woman died after the 16-foot canoe she was in hit a log in the river and capsized. The other person in the canoe was able to get the victim to shore and obtain help. The victim was unresponsive when first responders arrived. CPR was started but she was pronounced dead at the scene. *(Life jacket worn – no)*
8. 6/20 – Douglas Co. – Lake Andrew – A 61-year-old South St. Paul man drowned when he apparently fell overboard from his 16-foot motorboat. The victim had been out fishing and didn't return home when expected. Family members found the victim's empty boat at 8:22 p.m. and called authorities. The victim's body was found on the east shore of the lake and was recovered at about 10:15 p.m. *(Life jacket worn – no)*
9. 6/28 – Itasca Co. – Cut Foot Sioux Lake – A 58-year-old Brooklyn Park man died after falling out of a 16-foot motorboat. Authorities received a call about 9:20 a.m. and were told that a person was in the water calling for help and a boat was going in circles. The victim was removed from the water about 9:50 a.m. and transported to the hospital where he was pronounced dead. *(Life jacket worn – no)*
10. 7/24 – Cass Co. – Ponto Lake – A 39-year-old Nisswa man drowned after falling off his 8-foot personal watercraft at about 2:25 p.m. Family members on shore saw him riding and then saw him fall off into the water. They took their watercraft out to him and found him face down in the water. They brought him to shore and started CPR. Authorities arrived and continued CPR efforts, to no avail. *(Life jacket worn – yes)*
11. 7/30 – Hennepin Co. – Lake Minnetonka – A 35-year-old Mounds View woman drowned when she jumped into the water from a drifting 25-foot pontoon boat at about 7:05 p.m. She was going to join friends on a foam swim pad. She bobbed a few times, went under the water and did not resurface. Her body was recovered at about 2:35 the following day. *(Life jacket worn – no)*
12. 8/21 – Stearns Co. – Lake Sylvia – A 47-year-old New Munich man drowned after being thrown out of a 15-foot motorboat as it capsized about 2:15 p.m. Two boys, ages 10 and 7, were also in the boat when it flipped. The boys were wearing life jackets and were pulled from the water by witnesses. They couldn't locate the man. Authorities searched for the man and his body was recovered the following morning. *(Life jacket worn – no)*
13. 8/25 – Hubbard Co. – Fish Hook Lake – A 78-year-old Park Rapids man drowned after two motorboats collided, causing the 16-foot boat he was operating to capsize. Two other people from the capsized boat were injured. There were two people on board the 17-foot boat also involved in the collision, neither of which were injured. The victim disappeared after falling in the water and authorities searched for him until dark. The search was resumed the following morning and his body was recovered at 2:55 p.m. *(Life jacket worn – no.)*
14. 8/27 – Olmsted Co. – Silver Creek Reservoir – A 20-year-old Stewartville man drowned when the 17-foot canoe he and a friend were fishing from capsized at about 9:25 a.m. Both men were struggling

in the water and the friend tried to pull the victim to shore. The victim then went under water. Authorities recovered the man's body at about 12:30 p.m. (*Life jacket worn – no.*)

15. 10/18 – Marshall Co. – Thief Lake – A 66-year-old Pequot Lakes man drowned after his 12-foot motorboat capsized. He had been hunting in the area. Law enforcement was called regarding a truck that was parked along Thief Lake at 6:30 a.m. and when law enforcement arrived they discovered his overturned boat in the lake. A search was started and his body was found at 3:30 p.m. along the south shore of the lake. (*Life jacket worn – no.*)
  16. 10/25 – Cass Co. – Leech Lake – A 66-year-old Federal Dam man drowned after his 17-foot canoe capsized while he was setting a net. Authorities received a report about 6:50 p.m. regarding a capsized canoe on the lake. A search was started for the missing man. His body was found on 11/1/16. Several agencies assisted with the search. (*Life jacket worn – no.*)
  17. 11/4 – Cook Co. – Pine Lake – A 59-year-old Duluth man drowned when his 17-foot canoe apparently capsized. He had gone fishing in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness on 11/4 and did not return to work as scheduled on 11/7. A multi-agency search was started. The victim's truck was found at a boat access. Authorities also found his partially submerged canoe as well as some personal items. The victim's body was found in 80 feet of water on 11/9. (*Life jacket worn – no*)
  18. 11/26 – Carver Co. – Lake Waconia – A 35-year-old Waconia man drowned after apparently falling overboard while taking pictures from his stand-up paddleboard. He was reported missing at about 3:00 p.m. His anchored paddleboard was found on the lake with a life jacket tethered to it. A search of the area was started but the man wasn't located. The man's body was spotted by an ice fisherman with an underwater camera on 12/20/16. (*Life jacket worn - no.*)
- \*8/27 – Douglas Co. – Lake Le Homme Dieu – A 29-year-old Alexandria man drowned after falling overboard from the new 19-foot motorboat he was "lake testing" at about 9:15 a.m. A witness saw him heading toward shore and then saw the man in the water. He then lost sight of the man, called 911 and contacted the man's coworkers for help. A search was started and the man's body was located in 24 feet of water at 1:35 p.m. (*Life jacket worn – no.*) *This is a commercial boating fatality and will not be counted by the U.S. Coast Guard as a recreational boating fatality.*

**Summary:** There were 18 fatal recreational watercraft accidents, involving 19 boats, resulting in 18 deaths. There were two additional injuries and \$8,900 in property damage. There were 2.20 deaths per 100,000 registered boats, compared to the U. S. rate in 2015 of 5.3. Of the 18 accidents, 17 were single boat accidents, classified as: seven capsizings, seven falls overboard, two intentionally left boat and one sudden medical condition. There was one collision between two boats, one of which capsized, causing the operator to drown. Five of the deaths involved nonmotorized craft (four canoes and one paddle board) and 13 involved motorized craft (including three pontoon boats and one personal watercraft). Of the 19 watercraft involved, 17 had life jackets on board, but a life jacket was known to be worn by only two of the 18 victims (11%). The most common age ranges for victims were 61 years and over (6) and 51-60 years (4). There were six victims between the ages of 31-50 years. The most common age range for operators was 61 years and older (6) followed by ages 51-60 (4) and 31-40 (4). Alcohol was listed as a factor in nine of the 18 accidents (50%).

### *Non-Fatal Boating Accidents*

<b>Type of Accident</b>	<b>Number</b>
Capsizing	6
Collision with a fixed or floating object	6
Collision with another watercraft	28
Collision with an underwater object	2
Collision with swimmer or person in water	1
Fall in boat	2
Fall overboard	5
Fire/Explosion	4
Grounding, Hitting Bottom	3
Struck by Propeller	2
Sinking / Flooding / Swamping	4
Water-skiing, wake boarding or tubing	11
Other	5
Total reportable non-fatal boating accidents as of 12/31/16	79

#### Notes:

Reportable non-fatal boating accidents are those where there was at least \$2000 in property damage, an injury beyond first aid or total loss of the boat.

**Summary:** There were 79 reportable non-fatal boating accidents, involving 112 boats and resulting in 70 injuries. There was also \$214,374 in damage to boats and \$5,200 in damage to other property. The most common operator age range was 18-25 years (23), followed by 41-50 years (19) and 51-60 years (19). The most common age ranges for victims with injuries were 13-17 years (15), 18-25 years (13), 31-40 years (11) and 51-60 years (10). Alcohol was known to be a factor in 15 of the 79 total non-fatal accidents (19%).

### *Non-Boating Drownings*

1. Unknown – Hennepin Co. – Lake of the Isles – The body of a 62-year-old man was found frozen into the ice in a channel between Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun. He was found on 1/4/16. It is not known when or how the man entered the water, but it is believed that it was before the ice formed in the channel.
2. Unknown – Ramsey Co. – Mississippi River – A 36-year-old St. Paul man was found in the river between a railroad bridge and Robert St. on 2/1/16. He had been missing since mid-November. It is unknown how, when or where he entered the river.
3. 2/28 – St. Louis Co. – hotel pool – A 22-year-old Newport man drowned in a hotel pool. He was found unresponsive in the pool by friends at about 1:17 a.m. Hotel staff was notified and authorities were called. CPR and rescue breathing were started immediately. He was transported to a local hospital, where he was pronounced dead.
4. Unknown – Scott Co. – unnamed holding pond – The body of a 49-year-old Savage man was found in a holding pond just before 11:00 a.m. on 3/11/16. He was identified as a person missing since 11/7/15. It is unknown when or how he entered the water.

5. 3/27 – Washington Co. – pond behind residence – A 73-year-old Forest Lake man drowned in a pond behind his residence. He had been using a rake to remove debris from the pond at about 7:00 p.m. Shortly after that, he was found floating in the pond. CPR was started and he was transported to the hospital, where he was pronounced deceased.
6. 4/16 – Washington Co. – Brown’s Creek – A 19-year-old Afton man drowned after he experienced an accident with the scooter he was riding. He was discovered face down in the creek about 8:15 a.m. He had been riding on the trail and it appeared the scooter went down a hill, crossed the creek and impacted the other side of the creek. The victim was apparently ejected from the scooter and into the creek.
7. 4/27 – Hennepin Co. – holding pond – A 2-year-old Loretto boy drowned in a holding pond on a farm. He had been playing outside and went missing for about 10 minutes. He was found unresponsive in the pond at about 4:20 p.m. by family members. He was pulled from the pond and CPR was started by family members. Paramedics took over when they arrived but were unable to resuscitate him. He was pronounced dead at the scene.
8. 5/6 – Lake of the Woods Co. – Rapid/Rainy Rivers – A 64-year-old Warroad man drowned after falling in the river. He was fishing from the riverbank at about 5:08 p.m. when he slipped on rocks and fell into the rapids. He was found floating downstream of the rapids. He was pulled from the water by the fire department at 5:27 p.m. and CPR was started. He was transported to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead.
9. Unknown – Crow Wing Co. – Boom Lake – A 23-year-old Brainerd man drowned after he somehow entered the lake. He was reported missing at about 11:30 p.m. on 5/4/16. A search was started. Deputies found the victim’s body on the bottom of the lake in 7 feet of water on 5/7/16 at about 9:50 a.m. It is unknown how or when the victim entered the lake.
10. 5/22 – Dakota Co. – indoor apartment pool – A 4-year-old boy drowned about 6:00 p.m. He was playing unsupervised on the pool steps and then went further into the pool where he started to struggle. He was found unresponsive in the pool by another swimmer. He was taken out of the pool, CPR was started and he was transported to the hospital where he was pronounced dead.
11. 6/3 – Ramsey Co. – residential bathtub – A 27-year-old St. Anthony man drowned in his bathtub. He was found submerged by his girlfriend, who tried to get him out of the tub. She went to the hallway to get help and a neighbor pulled the man from the tub and started resuscitation until medics arrived. Resuscitation was unsuccessful.
12. 6/8 – Crow Wing Co. – Little Pine Lake – A 65-year-old Elk River man drowned after somehow falling into the lake. He was found unresponsive in the water at the end of his dock at about 5:15 p.m. It is unknown when he actually went into the water.
13. 6/11 – Cook Co. – Temperance River – An 18-year-old Wayzata man drowned when he entered the river at about 6:30 p.m. to swim. He was swept away by the current and did not resurface. His body was recovered at about 1:42 p.m. on 6/13.
14. 6/13 – Le Sueur Co. – Lake Francis – A 77-year-old Elysian man drowned while swimming in front of his dock. His wife came home about 7:15 p.m. and couldn’t find him. Neighbors had seen him swimming about 2:30 p.m. Authorities were called and divers located the victim on the lake bottom in 7 feet of water at about 8:10 p.m.

15. 6/18 – Marshall Co. – Tamarack River – A 5-year-old Warren boy drowned while playing near the river. He was reported missing at 7:00 p.m. and a ground search was started. A water search was started about 11:00 p.m. and the victim's body was located under a submerged dock at about 1:30 a.m. on 6/19.
16. 6/26 – Hennepin Co. – residential pool – A 9-year-old Shorewood boy was found unresponsive about 3:15 p.m. in the shallow end of a residential pool during a birthday party. He was removed from the pool and CPR was started by one of the adults at the party. He was airlifted to a hospital in Minneapolis where he was in critical condition. He died at the hospital on 6/28/16.
- 17 -18. 6/28 – Kandiyohi Co. – Foot Lake – A 10-year-old boy and an 11-year-old boy, both from Willmar, drowned after entering the lake. They were reported missing at about 6:00 p.m. A ground and water search was started. They were found in 4 ½ feet of water near the dock at about 10:00 p.m. They were both taken to the hospital, where they were pronounced dead.
19. 7/6 – Pine Co. – Kettle River – A 15-year-old Bruno boy drowned while swimming across the river at about 4:15 p.m. He was swimming with two friends when he began to have trouble. The friends tried to help but were being pulled under by the victim. The victim went under and didn't resurface. His body was recovered about 10:50 p.m.
20. 7/9 – Brown Co. – Mound Creek – A 23-year-old Brookings, SD man drowned while swimming at Mound Creek Park about 2:40 p.m. He was attempting to swim to friends when he started to call for help. The friends attempted to help, but could not hold on to the victim. He went under water. Authorities found him by boat just after 4:00 p.m. Resuscitation efforts on shore were not successful.
21. 7/15 – Kandiyohi Co. – Big Kandiyohi Lake – A 51-year-old Olivia man drowned while swimming across the lake/channel at about 6:40 p.m. The victim had gone about 175 yards when he went under the water and became unresponsive. Family members reached him by boat and took him from the water and started CPR. Medical units took over with no results.
22. 7/15 – Chisago Co. – St. Croix River – A 26-year-old Chisago City man was missing after falling into the river about 8:35 p.m. while taking a picture. A search was started that night. It resumed the following day, but had to be called off because of weather conditions. High water also made the search difficult. The victim's body was found on 7/22 at about 3:12 p.m., about a quarter mile south of the Interstate Park boat launch. Numerous agencies including the sheriff's office, MN State Patrol, MN DNR, Taylors Falls and Center City fire departments and the National Park Service assisted in the search.
23. 7/16 – St. Louis Co. – Lake Ore Be Gone – A 41-year-old Mountain Iron man drowned after jumping off a cliff into the lake just before 6:00 p.m. He surfaced and appeared to be unconscious, and then went under again. His body was recovered by a scuba diver from 35 feet of water at about 7:06 p.m.
24. 7/17 – St. Louis Co. – septic tank – A 3-year-old Duluth Township boy drowned after falling into a septic tank. He had been playing in the yard and the cover on the tank was not secure. He was removed from the tank and taken to the hospital where he was in critical condition. He died at the hospital on 7/18.
25. 7/31 – Hennepin Co. – Bush Lake – A 7-year-old Little Canada girl drowned while swimming at the beach. At about 4:15 p.m., another swimmer was going to jump off the swim platform and saw the

- girl floating in the water. The swimmer got her to shore and resuscitation was started. She was taken to the hospital where she was pronounced dead.
26. 7/31 – Wadena Co. – Spirit Lake – A 54-year-old Menahga man drowned while swimming at the beach at about 10:56 a.m. He was in the water near the floating raft when he went under water a couple of times. The third time he did not come back up. Lifeguards swam out to get him. He was unresponsive and CPR was started. He was airlifted to the hospital, where he was later pronounced dead.
  27. 8/1 – Winona Co. – Gilmore Creek – A 60-year-old Winona man drowned after somehow entering the water. He was found face down in the creek about 8:30 p.m. Life saving measures were attempted but were not successful. He had last been seen at 5:00 p.m. that day. It is not known what time he actually went in the water.
  28. 8/3 – Martin Co. – Sisseton Lake – A 16-year-old Fairmont boy drowned while swimming with friends. He was swimming back to shore when he went under water about 1:00 p.m. His friend was able to bring him to the surface but had to let go and couldn't find him again. His body was recovered by authorities about an hour and a half later.
  29. 8/5 – Dakota Co. – holding pond – An 85-year-old woman drowned in a holding pond near her assisted living residence. She was reported missing and a search was started in the building where she lived but then was moved outside. She was found floating in the holding pond and was recovered about 11:55 a.m. It was determined she had left the building the previous night, but it is unknown how or what time she actually entered the water.
  30. Unknown – Washington Co. – Mississippi River – The body of a 36-year-old man was found floating in the river by fishermen at about 4:45 p.m. on 8/15/16. It is unknown when or how he came to be in the water.
  31. 8/30 – Polk Co. – Brule Gravel Pit – A 51-year-old Crookston man drowned after falling down an embankment into the gravel pit. It is unknown what he was doing at the gravel pit or when he actually entered the water. His body was recovered on 9/3/16 at 8:29 a.m.
  32. 9/1 – Hennepin Co. – community center pool – A 34-year-old Shakopee man drowned while swimming in a community center pool at about 8:40 p.m. A witness heard him call “help” and then he went under the water. She yelled to call 911 and then swam to get him, and another person in the area helped her get him to the surface and into the shallow water. He was removed from the pool and CPR was started. He was transported to the hospital where he was later pronounced deceased.
  33. 9/4 – Stearns Co. – Quarry #11 – A 34-year-old Columbia Heights man drowned while swimming at Quarry Park and Nature Preserve. He was swimming in the middle of the quarry about 6:12 p.m. when he disappeared under water. Authorities were called and they started searching the water. The man was located about 8:30 p.m. and was transported to the hospital, where he was later pronounced dead.
  34. Unknown – Benton Co. – Stoney Brook Creek – A 35-year-old Foley man was found face down in the creek on 9/12/16. He had last been seen on 9/4/16. It is unknown how or when he came to be in the water.
  35. Unknown – Dakota Co. – Mississippi River – The body of a 55-year-old Hopkins woman was found in the Mississippi River near the 494 Bridge on 9/18. It is unknown how or when she entered the river.

36. 10/4 – Washington Co. – community pool – A 74-year-old Stacy man drowned while participating in a senior swimming class. He was found in the deep end of the pool at the conclusion of the class. He was unresponsive and resuscitation was started, but was unsuccessful.
37. 10/8 – Winona Co. – Mississippi River – A 19-year-old White Bear Lake man was reported missing from Winona State University. He was seen on video on 10/7 just before 10:00 p.m. A witness reported he may have seen the missing student near the levy later that night. His body was located floating in the river on 10/18.
38. 11/2? – Lake of the Woods Co. – Lake of the Woods – A 53-year-old Lakeville man was found in the lake near a dock on 11/10. It is unknown what he was doing or how he came to be in the water.
39. 11/28 – Dakota Co. – residential bathtub – A 27-year-old Burnsville woman apparently fell while taking a shower and blocked the drain. Her roommate found her face down in the water. Resuscitation was started, to no avail.
40. 12/28 – Cass Co. – Big Deep Lake – An 82-year-old Hackensack man drowned when the ATV he was operating came too close to the bank of the lake, causing it to rollover. It landed on top of the ice, which had a couple of inches of water on top. The man was pinned face down in the water underneath the ATV.

**Summary:** There were 40 non-boating drownings. Location of drowning: lake (15), river (9), pool (5), creek (4), pond (4), bathtub (2) and septic tank (1). The most common age range for victims was 61 years and over (8), followed by 18-25 years (6) and 51-60 years (6). Victim's ages ranged from 2 to 86 years old.