

2017 Minnesota Boating Accident and Drowning Summary

Prepared by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Boat and Water Safety
as of 4/24/18

Summary of Accidents – as of 12/31 each year

Accident Category and Year	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Boating Fatalities	12	18	18	14	12	15	16	12	15	12
Non-Fatal Boating Accidents	92	79	71	36	65	72	61	71	70	77
Non-Boating Drownings	31	40	35	29	30	40	50	34	28	33

Summary of Accidents for the Entire Year – January - December

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

2017 Statewide Summary – as of 12/31/17

Boating Fatalities

- 2/16 – Winona Co. – Mississippi River – A 56-year-old Weaver man had gone kayaking on the river. His truck was found about 8:59 p.m. when he failed to return. A search was started and the man's body was found on shore at the public access at about 12:45 a.m. (*Life jacket worn – yes*)
- 3/5 – Anoka Co. – Coon Lake – A 31-year-old East Bethel man drowned after falling overboard from his nonmotorized 14-foot rowboat. He and a friend were attempting to recover his snowmobile that had sunk earlier in the day. They walked the boat out on the ice and as they got closer to open water, they got in the boat and using a paddle, got to the sunken snowmobile's location. While trying to retrieve the snowmobile, the man somehow fell overboard, causing the boat to capsize. The friend was able to get to more shallow water and be rescued. The victim attempted to hold on to the boat, but was unable. Deputies were attempting to get out to him when he went under water. He was flown to the hospital where he died on 3/17/17. (*Life jackets worn – no*)
- 4/5 or 4/6 – Carlton Co. – Bob Lake – A 67-year-old Eden Prairie man drowned when he possibly fell out of his canoe. Family had not heard from him for about a day, so a friend had gone to check on him and found the partially submerged canoe with a dog in it. The man's body was located in 17 feet of water, near the canoe's location, using underwater search equipment. There was still some ice in the water. (*Life jacket worn – no*)
- 5/26 – Kandiyohi Co. – Big Kandiyohi Lake – A 56-year-old Blomkest man drowned after falling overboard while fishing from his 16-foot motorboat. Two fishermen called authorities at 6:17 p.m. after finding the victim floating in the lake. He was brought to the boat landing and lifesaving efforts

were started. The victim was transported to the hospital where he was pronounced dead. The victim's boat was located pushed into trees on shore with the trolling motor still running. *(Life jacket worn – no)*

5. 5/31 – Hennepin Co. – Lake Minnetonka – A 65-year-old Blaine man drowned after apparently falling overboard from his 22-foot sailboat. Authorities received a report of an abandoned sailboat on the lake at about 1:35 p.m. They were unable to contact the boat's owner. He had last been seen at the dock about two hours before authorities arrived. A search of the lake was started. His body was located in the lake on 6/1 at about 2:20 p.m. It is unknown what actually caused him to fall overboard. *(Life jacket worn – no)*
6. 6/8 – Otter Tail Co. – Long Lake – A 68-year-old Fergus Falls man drowned after falling overboard from his 14-foot motorboat about 11:15 a.m. Witnesses went to help the man in the water when they saw the boat circling him. They got him in their boat and started CPR on the way to shore. He was taken to the hospital where he later passed away. *(Life jacket worn – no)*
7. 6/8? – Crow Wing Co. – Nokay Lake – Authorities received separate reports, on the morning of 6/9, of a missing man and of an empty boat on the lake. The 17-foot motorboat was registered to the missing man. The 54-year-old Brainerd man's body was located in the lake, at about 7:15 a.m. on 6/10, using side-scan sonar. He apparently had fallen overboard while fishing and drowned, possibly on the morning of 6/8. *(Life jacket worn – no)*
8. 6/11 – Winona Co. – Mississippi River – A 24-year-old Arcadia, WI man drowned when the 16-foot motorboat he and another man were fishing from capsized at about 5:45 p.m. They were approaching the Lock and Dam #6 spillway and started taking on water, causing the boat to capsize. The operator was able to get to shore but the 24-year-old passenger was having trouble in the water. He went under before a witness could get to him. The victim was located about 75 yards downriver. Neither man was wearing a life jacket. *(Life jacket worn – no)*
9. 6/15 – Washington Co. – Lake Jane – A 27-year-old Woodbury man drowned when the motorized 15-foot canoe he was operating started taking on water and capsized just after 11:00 a.m. He and two other men were fishing from the moving canoe when a witness on shore saw the canoe capsize. The witness took his pontoon out to help the men. He was able to get two of them out of the water, but was unable to reach the victim. Only one of the three people on board the canoe was wearing a life jacket. *(Life jacket worn – no)*
10. 7/22 – St. Louis Co. – Dinham Lake – A 54-year-old Burnsville woman drowned when the 17-foot motorboat she was a passenger in crashed into a dock about 11:15 p.m. She was thrown into the water and was not located for several minutes. Other boat occupants and neighbors found her and brought her to shore. CPR was started and she was transported to the hospital where she was pronounced deceased. *(Life jacket worn – no)*
11. 8/26 – Otter Tail Co. – West Battle Lake – A 39-year-old Grand Forks, ND man drowned after apparently falling off the personal watercraft he had been operating. He was reported missing, after the unoccupied personal watercraft was found floating on the lake, about 6:00 p.m. A search was started and his body was found on 8/31 in about 47 feet of water. The incident was unwitnessed and it is unknown what time the accident actually occurred. *(Life jacket worn – no)*
12. 9/20 – St. Louis Co. – Lake Kabetogama – A 66-year-old Chicago, IL man drowned after falling overboard from the 14-foot motorboat he was a passenger in. He was seated in the front of the

boat when it apparently hit the wake from another boat, throwing him overboard. He was pulled from the water, unconscious, and brought to shore where CPR was performed. He was pronounced deceased at the scene. *(Life jacket worn – no)*

Summary: There were 12 fatal recreational watercraft accidents, involving 12 boats, resulting in 12 deaths. There were four additional injuries and \$19,250 in property damage. There were 1.45 deaths per 100,000 registered boats, compared to the U. S. rate in 2016 of 5.9. All of the fatal accidents involved a single boat. The accidents are classified as: falls overboard (8), capsizing (3) and collision with a fixed object - dock (1). Seven of the watercraft had single occupants (two people on board (3), three people on board (1), four people on board (1)). Four of the deaths involved nonmotorized craft (1 canoe, 1 kayak, 1 rowboat and 1 sailboat), and eight involved motorized craft (including 1 canoe and 1 personal watercraft). The boat lengths included: 12 feet and under (2), 13-15 feet (4), 16-18 feet (4), 21-26 feet (1) and 1 unregistered canoe of unknown length. Of the 12 watercraft involved, nine had life jackets on board but a life jacket was known to be worn by only one of the victims (8%). The most common age ranges for victims were 51-60 years (4) and 61 years and over (4). There were four victims between the ages of 18-40 years. The most common age range for operators was 51-60 years (4) followed by 61 years and over (3) and 31-40 years (3). Alcohol was listed as a factor in six of the 12 accidents (50%).

Non-Fatal Boating Accidents

Type of Accident	Number
Capsizing	5
Collision with a fixed or floating object	8
Collision with another watercraft	38
Collision with an underwater object	3
Collision with swimmer or person in water	0
Fall in boat	6
Fall overboard	8
Fire/Explosion	3
Grounding, Hitting Bottom	5
Struck by Propeller	2
Sinking / Flooding / Swamping	2
Water-skiing, wake boarding or tubing	9
Other	3
Total reportable non-fatal boating accidents as of 12/31/17	92

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 92 reportable non-fatal boating accidents, involving 132 boats, resulting in 64 injuries. There was also \$819,157 in damage to boats and \$6,300 in damage to other property. The most common operator age range was 51-60 years (29), followed by 61 years and over (23), 18-25 years (21) and 31-40 years (20). The most common age ranges for persons with injuries were 18-25 years (13), 51-60 years (10), 41-50 years

(8) and 6-12 years (8). Alcohol was known to be a factor in 14 of the 92 total non-fatal accidents (15%). Life jackets were known to be worn by 36 of the 64 persons with injuries.

Non-Boating Drownings

1. Unknown – Washington Co. – residential bathtub – A 57-year-old woman was found deceased in the bathtub on 1/18/17. Her son had last spoken to her on 1/16.
2. 2/28 – Stearns Co. – abandoned manure pit – A 46-year-old Freeport man was operating a skid loader, on ice covering an abandoned manure pit, at about 1:53 p.m. The ice broke and the man was trapped in the submerged skid loader for about 25 minutes. He was removed from the water and CPR was started. He was airlifted to the hospital where he was later pronounced deceased.
3. 3/10 – Aitkin Co. – Big Sandy Lake – A 59-year-old McGregor man was driving his side-by-side ATV on the ice at about noon. A witness who had been watching the ATV lost his line of sight behind a building and then didn't see the ATV anywhere. He called 911. The victim was found in the cab of the ATV in about 8 feet of water. He was taken to the hospital, where he died later that night.
4. 3/25? – Stearns Co. – Mississippi River – A 21-year-old Andover man was reported missing. He was a student in St. Cloud and last seen on the railroad bridge over the river. A search was started and his body was recovered from the river on 3/31.
5. Unknown – Washington Co. – Mississippi River – The body of a 22-year-old Edina man was found in the river on 4/8/17 at about 9:22 p.m. The man had been reported missing and had last been seen on 2/28/17. It is unknown how or when he came to be in the river.
6. 4/22 – Stearns Co. – Pearl Lake – A 69-year-old woman drowned while at her summer camper. She was last seen at about 2:00 p.m. People started looking for her at about 4:00 p.m. and she was located face down in the water at about 6:10 p.m. Lifesaving efforts were to no avail. It is unknown how or when she entered the water.
7. 4/25 – Hennepin Co. – Mississippi River – A 22-year-old Minneapolis man drowned after he and a friend fell from a ledge above Upper St. Anthony Falls a little after 8:00 p.m. They were swept down the falls and into the middle pool of the river. The friend was able to make it to shore, but couldn't see the victim. Authorities were called and a search was started. His body was located by deputies on 5/4/17.
8. 4/28 – Douglas Co. – Cowdry/Darling channel – A 12-year-old Alexandria girl drowned after jumping in the water. She and a friend had been longboarding and stopped at the shore of Lake Cowdry at about 4:55 p.m. The victim jumped in the lake and floated with the current into the channel, where she started to struggle. Authorities were called and the victim was located about 6:10 p.m. She was transported to the hospital where she was pronounced dead.
9. 5/14 – Ramsey Co. – storm water pond – An 18-year-old St. Paul man drowned after somehow entering a storm water pond. It is unknown what time he entered the pond, but his body was found and reported to authorities about 12:30 p.m.
10. 6/1 – Hennepin Co. – backyard pool - A 4-year-old Brooklyn Center boy drowned in the pool behind his residence. He was found floating in the pool by his brother. Another brother started CPR and 911 was called. The boy was transported to the hospital, where he died several days later. The boy had entered the pool without the brothers' knowledge.

11. 6/4 – Washington Co. – Lake Elmo Park swim pond – A 6-year-old St. Paul girl drowned while swimming. The victim was found on the bottom of the pond, at about 1:15 p.m., by another swimmer. She was pulled out of the water and lifesaving efforts were started. She was transported to the hospital where she was pronounced deceased.
12. 6/5 – Clay Co. – Red River of the North – A 28-year-old Fargo, ND man went in the river to cool off at about 1:30 p.m. He started swimming from the Moorhead side of the river towards the Fargo side. He went under water. Rescue attempts were unsuccessful. The man's body was located about 1,200 meters north of where the incident occurred, on 6/15 at 6:30 a.m., by fire department personnel.
13. 6/5 – Wright Co. – North Fork Crow River – An 18-year-old Dassel man drowned while swimming in the river at about 7:55 p.m. He was swimming under the water, and did not resurface. Authorities were called and a search was started. His body was recovered on 6/8 in the area that he went missing.
14. 7/2 – Hennepin Co. – residential pool – A 1-year-old Maple Grove boy apparently drowned after somehow entering the pool in his backyard. He was located in the pool just before 9:00 a.m. and CPR was started by a family member. The boy was unconscious and was transported to the hospital, where he was later pronounced deceased. It is unknown when the boy entered the pool, but it was sometime after 7:30 a.m.
15. 7/4 or 7/5 – Mower Co. – Mill Pond – A 55-year-old Austin man drowned after somehow entering the pond. He was last seen the night of 7/4 and he was found the following morning floating in the water. It is not known where or when he went into the water.
16. 7/5 – Pennington Co. – Pennington Co. Gravel Pit – A 40-year-old Thief River Falls man drowned while swimming in the gravel pit at about 6:30 p.m. He was in the middle of the pit with his son on his back. A friend noticed something was wrong and when she got to him, he wasn't breathing. CPR was started, and when authorities arrived they took over. He was transported by ambulance to the hospital, where he was pronounced deceased.
17. 7/8 – Washington Co. – Carver Lake – A 5-year-old St. Paul Park boy drowned while at the park beach at about 4:35 p.m. He had been swimming when he apparently went underwater. He was reported missing and a search of the water was started. He was located in 8 feet of water by a bystander during the search. CPR was started and he was taken to the hospital, where he died the following day.
18. 7/23 – Ramsey Co. – residential bathtub – A 24-year-old White Bear Lake woman was found submerged in the bathtub by her father at about 8:24 p.m. She was unconscious and not breathing. He called authorities and CPR was started. She was pronounced deceased at the scene.
19. 8/4 – Sherburne Co. – Mississippi River – A 7-year-old St. Cloud boy drowned while swimming in the river at about 11:30 a.m. He was with his younger brother at the park, in an area not designated for swimming. The younger boy flagged down a runner and said his brother went under water. Authorities were called and the boy was removed from the water at about 11:55 a.m. CPR was started and he was transported to the hospital, where he died.
20. 8/10 – St. Louis Co. – Lake Superior – A 10-year-old Hudson, WI girl drowned while swimming with her father (see number 21) at Park Point in Duluth at about 4:20 p.m. The lake was very rough with large waves and current warnings. She started to get pulled out into the lake. Her sister was on

shore and called to their father to help the girl. They both were struggling in the water and the sister ran to get help. The girl was pulled from the water at about 5:25 p.m. and resuscitation was started. She was transported to the hospital, where she later died.

21. 8/10 – St. Louis Co. – Lake Superior – A 38-year old Osceola, WI man drowned while swimming with his daughter (see number 20) at Park Point in Duluth at about 4:20 p.m. His daughter got pulled out into the lake and he tried to help her back to shore. They both started to struggle. His other daughter, who was on shore, ran to get help. He was pulled from the water at about 6:05 p.m. Resuscitation was started, but to no avail.
22. 8/12 – St. Louis Co. – Buhl mining pit – A 56-year-old Buhl man drowned while attempting to rescue his dog at about 6:11 p.m. The dog was caught in some vegetation and the man swam in after it. He apparently became exhausted and submerged. The man was pulled from the water by the rescue squad at about 8:00 p.m. and was transported to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead.
23. 8/26 – St. Louis Co. – Lester River – A 15-year-old Duluth boy drowned while swimming in the river with friends at about 5:20 p.m. They were in an unsanctioned swimming area in the park. The river flow was high. He jumped in, went under the water and didn't come back up. He was located downstream about 20 minutes later. CPR was started and he was transported to the hospital. He died later that evening.
24. 9/23 – Lake Co. – Lake Superior – A 42-year-old New Hope man drowned when his scuba tank lost all its air. He had been diving on a shipwreck in the lake with a group. He indicated he needed to surface and quickly swam toward the surface. There were other divers at the surface and he yelled for help. He disappeared before another diver could get to him. The instructor and another diver recovered him from the bottom.
25. 10/26 – Hennepin Co. – residential bathtub – A 66-year-old Edina woman was found deceased in her bathtub by a police officer who responded to a request for a welfare check. It is unknown when the incident actually occurred.
26. 11/25 – Beltrami Co. – Upper Red Lake – A 28-year-old Stacy man drowned when the OHV he was riding on fell through the ice at about midnight. He was riding with a friend, who also drowned (see number 27). They had rented a fish house until noon on 11/26, and were seen fishing during the day on 11/25. They were reported missing when they didn't return to the resort. His body was located and recovered on 11/27.
27. 11/25 – Beltrami Co. – Upper Red Lake – A 29-year-old Princeton woman drowned when the OHV she was riding on fell through the ice at about midnight. She was riding with a friend, who also drowned (see number 28). They had rented a fish house until noon on 11/26, and were seen fishing during the day on 11/25. They were reported missing when they didn't return to the resort. Her body was located and recovered on 11/27.
28. 12/11 – Crow Wing Co. – Serpent Lake – A 34-year-old Ironton man drowned after falling through the ice while snowmobiling. A police officer heard someone calling for help at 5:30 a.m. but could not see anyone. Rescuers arrived and attempted to locate the man in the dark. They followed some snowmobile tracks that led to thin ice that had been open water the day before. His body was located at 1:15 p.m. that day.

29. 12/15 – Hubbard Co. – Grace Lake – A 23-year-old Bemidji woman drowned when the UTV she and her boyfriend were riding on broke through the ice about 11:30 p.m. They had become disoriented due to the snow and drove into an area of open water. The operator made it to shore and 911 was called. Authorities located the passenger and got her out of the water. Live saving procedures were started and she was taken by ambulance to the hospital, where she died.
30. 12/16 – Itasca Co. – Rice Lake – A 52-year-old Cohasset woman drowned when the ATV she and a friend were riding on broke through the ice at about 5:30 p.m. The operator saw darker ice so turned around to head back to shore. While turning, the ATV broke through. The victim had already exited the ATV by the time the operator got out. He surfaced, but couldn't see her. He searched the water and couldn't locate her. He went for help. Her body was recovered on 12/17.
31. 12/22 – Hennepin Co. – hotel swimming pool – A 55-year-old Brockport, NY man drowned in a hotel swimming pool. He had been in the hot tub and said he was warm, so he went in the swimming pool to cool off. He was found about 15 minutes later on the bottom of the pool. CPR was started and he was transported to the hospital, where he later died.

Summary: There were 31 non-boating drownings. Location of drowning: lake (14), river (7), pool (4), bathtub (3), pond/ditch (2), abandoned manure pit (1). The most common age range for victims was 18-25 years (7), followed by 51-60 years (6), 6-12 years (4), 0-5 years (3), 26-30 years (3), 31-40 years (3), 41-50 years (2), 61 years and over (2) and 13-17 years (1) . Victim's ages ranged from 14 months to 69 years.