

2007 Minnesota Boating Accident and Drowning Summary

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

Summary of Accidents – Compared to Prior Years						
Accident Category & Year	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
Boating Fatalities	15	14	23	15	17	30
Non-Fatal Boating Accidents	113	102	93	73	94	135
Non-Boating Drownings	26	49	45	30	32	42

Boating Fatalities

- 1-4. 5/12 – Winona Co. – Miss. River – Two adults and two children (10 & 8 years of age) from St. Paul drowned after the open boat they were in capsized below Lock & Dam No. 7, near Dresbach (just north of LaCrosse, WI). They were fishing below the dam and pulled up their anchor around 5pm to start the outboard. For some reason the engine did not work, and the re-circulating current from the dam apparently pulled them close to the dam face. Other boaters nearby did manage to get a line to them, but when they tried to pull the victim's boat away from the dam – it sank. All four disappeared. Assistance was summoned at 5:35pm and the search operation ensued. The mangled boat was recovered at 6:40pm, one adult was recovered on 5/16, one adult and one child (8 yr old) recovered on 5/17. The last child's body has not been recovered as of this report (*Life Jackets Worn – Unk.*)

5. 6/2 – Cass Co. – Leech Lake - A 51-year-old Minneapolis man drowned after the 17-foot boat he was fishing out of with another person swamped and capsized around 11:20am. The boat evidently came around an island and hit waves. He was pulled from the lake by nearby anglers, taken to shore and then to a Park Rapids hospital. Resuscitation efforts were unsuccessful and he was pronounced dead. (*Life Jackets Worn – Yes*)

6. 6/27 – Pine Co. – Island Lake – A 64-year-old Sandstone man died after being ejected from his boat around 4:30pm, when it hit a wave. The man apparently was traveling rapidly around the lake, with the drain plug out, trying to get the water out of his craft. A witness took his pontoon boat out and reached the victim, held his head out of the water, but could not get him on board. More help arrived and he was taken aboard the pontoon where CPR was started. A waiting ambulance took him to a Moose Lake hospital, but resuscitation efforts were in vain. (*Life Jacket Worn – No*)

7. 6/29 – Crow Wing Co. – Crooked Lake - A 14-year-old Chisago City boy died when his personal watercraft (PWC) and one operated by a 13-year-old collided about 12:10pm. The 14-year-old's craft was being followed by the one operated by the 13-year-old. The first PWC slowed down and the following craft struck it from the stern. The victim on the first PWC was hit by the second craft and wound up in the water. A nearby resident used his pontoon boat to bring both boys to shore. CPR was attempted on the 14-year-old, but to no avail. (*Life Jackets Worn – Yes, by both operators*)

8. 6/29 – Ramsey Co. – Turtle Lake - A 35-year-old Shoreview man drowned around 8:30pm after stopping his boat and jumping into the water in an attempt to save his 2-year-old son. He was pulling his three sons (2, 4 & 7 years of age) on a tube, when his 2-year-old son (wearing a life jacket) fell off and landed face down in the water. He struggled to make it to the towed tube with the boy, but started to go under. His wife threw a flotation device to him and the 7-year-old son tried pulling the tube closer. The wife then entered the water to attempt to save her husband and the 2-year-old, but did not get to her husband in time. All those in the water got back aboard the boat successfully, except for the man, who disappeared. He was recovered after more than an hour in a little over 5 feet of water. Resuscitation efforts on shore and at the hospital were in vain, however. (*Life Jacket Worn – Not by victim nor his wife, but all three children were wearing PFDs*)

9. 7/19 – Cass Co. - Steamboat Lake - A 48-year-old Des Moines, Iowa man drowned after capsizing or falling out of his canoe around 5:25pm on 7/19. He was reported missing that night. Searchers located the swamped canoe and a paddle, on the Southwest shore of the lake, Friday morning and the body was eventually recovered around 11am on 7/23. (*Life jacket worn – No*)

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10. 7/29 – Ramsey Co. – Lake Owasso – A 35-year-old St. Paul man fell off a tube being pulled behind a boat around 2pm and disappeared in the northeast portion of the lake. The tube apparently hit a wave or wake, and he was thrown into the water. Recovery operations were carried out in about 25 feet of water, about 300 feet from the eastern shore of the lake. The body was recovered on 8/3 around 11am. *(Life jacket worn by victim – No).*
11. 9/7 – Ramsey Co. – Long Lake – A 73-year-old Monterey, California man drowned around 5:50 pm while kayaking. He was visiting relatives, who lived on the lake. He decided to take the kayak out on the lake and then capsized. He had never kayaked before, was not wearing a life jacket and could not swim. A relative fishing on a nearby dock even reminded him about a life jacket as he headed out on the water. Hearing the cries for help, another relative came down to the shore and tried to get his boat underway, but it would not run, so he swam out to try and save the victim. The victim had already gone under in about 20 feet of water however. After getting the 911 call at around 6pm, authorities arrived and recovered the victim in 20 feet of water about 5 minutes after commencing the underwater search. He was transported by boat to a waiting ambulance and then to a Minneapolis hospital, where he was pronounced dead at 7:41pm. *(Life jacket worn by victim – No).*
12. 10/19? – Hennepin Co. – Cedar Lake – A 55-year-old Minneapolis man drowned after apparently capsizing his 10-foot boat on this lake in the City of Mpls. He was last seen in the parking lot at the beach at 3pm on the 19th. A passerby spotted the overturned boat the morning of the 20th and called 911 around 10am. The victim was recovered near the boat around 2pm. *(Life jacket worn by victim – No).*
13. 10/27 – Kandiyohi Co. – Eagle Lake - A 35-year-old Plymouth man drowned after he and the operator of a 14' fishing boat were ejected from the boat on the north end of the lake, just before 11 am. When the boat got up on plane the operator leaned against the tiller of the 25 hp outboard while reaching to turn on his GPS. The empty craft was witnessed going in circles. A bystander used a personal watercraft to rescue the operator after the two victims had been in the 53-degree water about 10 minutes. He also tried to save the second person but, unfortunately, the second victim had gone under by the time the rescuer got to where he was last seen. The rescued boat operator was taken to a Willmar hospital, where he was treated for hypothermia and released. Search operations involving crews from two counties recovered the body of the other victim from 29 feet of water around 5:45pm. *(Life jacket worn by either victim – No).*
14. 10/27 – Cass Co. – Sugar Lake - A 50-year-old St. Paul man drowned shortly before 4pm after he capsized his 9-foot kayak in 40-degree water, while trying to pull a dive raft to shore. His wife dove off the dock and attempted to rescue him, but the water was too cold. Help was summoned at 3:58 pm and arrived on the scene a short time later. He was pulled from 15-20 feet of water and rushed to a Grand Rapids hospital where he was pronounced dead. *(Life jacket worn by victim – No).*
15. 11/2 – Anoka Co. – Centerville Lake – A 49-year-old St. Paul man died when he fell out of a 16-foot fishing boat around 3 pm. He was reaching for his fishing line when he went into the water over the boat's stern. The boat operator jumped into the water to rescue him, but to no avail. The operator and another passenger then went to shore and found two hunters who went back out on the lake and located the body floating just below the surface in 6-10 feet of water. Local police received the 911 call at 3:09pm. He was returned to shore where CPR was started and medical help arrived. Unfortunately he could not be resuscitated. *(Life jacket worn by victim – No).*

Summary: 12 fatal accidents, involving 13 boats - resulting in 15 deaths, 1 injury and no reported property damage. Of the total of 12 accidents, 4 were classified as falls overboard, 4 capsizing, 1 water sports (tubing), 1 was as swamping, 1 was a collision with another boat and 1 listed as "other." Life jackets were known to be worn by only two of victims out of the total of 15 (13%). Most common operator age range was 31-50 years old.

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Non-Fatal Boating Accidents

Capsizing	7
Collision w / fixed/floating object	12
Collision w / another watercraft	30
Fall in boat	2
Fall overboard	15
Fire/Explosion	5
Grounding / Hitting Bottom	7
Sinking / Flooding / Swamping	2
Water skiing, wake boarding or tubing	25
Other	8
Total Non Fatal Accidents	113

Summary: 113 non-fatal accidents, involving 150 boats – resulting in 108 injuries, \$457,695 in damage to boats and \$7,000 damage to other property. Most common operator age range was 31-50 years old. Two most common age ranges for injuries were 18-25 years old and 41-50 years old.

Non-Boating Drownings

1. 1/14 – LeSueur Co. – Lake Tetonka – An 18-year-old Owatonna man drowned after his snowmobile went into a large are of open water late Sunday night. He was reported missing around 11:30pm. He had been ice fishing with friends about a half mile from the open area and went to warm up. His snowmobile was found on 1/15. Recovery took place around 10:45am on 1/19 with the aid of sonar brought in from Wisconsin.
2. 1/15 – Hennepin Co. – Lake Minnetonka - A 56-year-old Mound man died as a result of immersion hypothermia and drowning, after his snowmobile went through thin ice in the Seton Channel Area. A passerby on a bridge reported that a snowmobiler was in the water late in the afternoon. Deputies pulled him out and attempted resuscitation, but to no avail.
3. 3/29 – Ramsey Co. – apartment pool – A 20-year-old woman drowned in an apartment pool while swimming. A 15-year-old girl who was also in the pool saw her struggling in the water around 6:15pm and called for help. Resuscitation efforts by the apartment staff and paramedics were in vain.
4. 4/9 – Stearns Co. – residential bathtub - A 66-year-old Richmond woman drowned in her bathtub. Someone checked on her at 7pm and then found her underwater at 8:47pm.
5. 6/8 – Cass Co.- Roosevelt Lake - A 25-year-old Mankato man drowned after falling off a dock when he was fishing with his young son. He was found unresponsive near a dock around 1:20pm in 3 feet of water. Help was summoned, CPR was initiated and he was then transported by ambulance to a Crosby hospital, where he was pronounced dead.
6. 6/15 – St. Louis Co. – Island Lake Reservoir – A 33-year-old Duluth man drowned around 5:20pm, after attempting to swim after a boat that had drifted away from an island that he and his companion were camping on. His companion attempted to reach him when he got into trouble, but was not able to do so. Help was summoned and his body was recovered from about 10 feet of water just after 8:30pm.
7. 6/21 – Anoka Co. – holding pond - A 5-year-old Blaine girl drowned after wandering away from her home around 1:15 pm and somehow entering a holding pond about 400-500 yards away. The autistic girl's mother (who had taken a number of precautions to keep her from wandering off) quickly noticed she was missing and called 911. Searchers from various agencies and the neighborhood looked for her. She was recovered about 10 feet out into the pond around 3:30pm and resuscitation was attempted, but to no avail.
8. 6/24 – Koochiching Co. – Rainy River – A 30-year-old Deer River man drowned while swimming across the river to Canada, just above Manitou Rapids. Witnesses saw him leave shore and take a few strokes and then go down about 2:15pm. He was then swept through the rapids. Authorities from a number of agencies on both sides of the border searched for his body. His body was eventually found two miles downstream from the rapids around 6:30pm on 6/28.

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9. 7/6 – Washington Co. – St. Croix River – A 20-year-old St. Paul man drowned in about 3-1/2 feet of water about 15 feet from shore, at an unguarded Lake St. Croix Beach around 8 pm. He was showing signs of distress on his way back to shore and went under the water. Onlookers pulled him from the water within about a minute and started CPR. Emergency personnel arrived within 2 minutes of the 911 call and took over resuscitation efforts. He was taken to a St. Paul hospital where he was pronounced dead.
10. 7/8 – Winona Co. – private pool - A 22-month-old Winona girl climbed the ladder and entered a back yard aboveground swimming pool near Stockton. The child's family discovered her and called 911 shortly before 3pm. Emergency personnel arrived; she was transported to a Winona hospital, but to no avail.
11. 7/16 – Stearns Co. – Crooked Lake - A 61-year-old Clearwater man drowned just before 4pm while swimming alone in the lake. Neighbors heard cries for help, but could not get to him in time. His body was recovered around 5:15pm in 18 feet of water, about 250 feet off shore.
12. 7/? – Hennepin Co. – Lake Hiawatha - A 41-year-old Minneapolis man drowned after entering the lake on the northeast side. A person walking their dog spotted the body in 2-1/2 feet of water on July 16th at around 9:30am.
- 13-14. 7/26 – Ramsey Co. – storm sewer/ Miss. River – Two men working in the St. Paul storm sewer drowned around 3:30pm when a sudden storm brought a large amount of rain to the city. They did not get out of the tunnels fast enough to avoid the increased water levels that resulted. The first victim was recovered near the sewer outlet in the Miss. River on 7/27 around 6pm and the second was found on 7/28 about 4:45pm.
15. 7/ 27 – Hennepin Co. – Lake Mtka. Reg. Park Swimming Pond - A 3-year-old Minnetonka boy drowned about 11:50am in a swimming pond in Lake Minnetonka Regional Park. He was last seen on shore playing in the sand with other children, but then disappeared. His mother began searching for him around the pond. Lifeguards joined in, and a bystander helping in that effort found him in 4.5' of water around noon. CPR was started and the boy was airlifted to a Minneapolis hospital, but to no avail.
16. 7/28 – Scott Co. – Minnesota River - A 32-year-old Randall man drowned after entering the water around 5:40am. He was with a group of friends and apparently stepped off a sandbar into a deeper area of the river. Authorities were called and his body was recovered around 10:30am in 17 feet of water just downstream from where he was last seen.
17. 7/31 – Ramsey Co. – Long Lake - A 5-year-old Richfield boy drowned around 7:30pm while swimming at a beach in New Brighton. His parents and other family were at the beach and there were three lifeguards on duty. No one witnessed him go under the water. A swimmer came across his body in five feet of water and he was brought to shore by a bystander around 7:40pm. The lifeguards performed CPR and used an automatic external defibrillator (AED). He was rushed to a St. Paul hospital, but could not be resuscitated.
18. 8/4 – Hubbard Co. – Fish Hook Lake - A 55-year-old Park Rapids woman drowned while swimming. She was swimming for about two hours and her companion lost sight of her. He called 911 just after 9pm. Her body was recovered at 9:48pm in 5-1/2 ft of water on the south shore of the lake, about 500 yards north & 500 yards west of the swim area.
19. 8/6 – Stearns Co. – private pool – A 20-year-old New Jersey man drowned after entering an in-ground home pool around 12:30 am. Residents at that home found him on the bottom of the pool in 9-feet of water. He was pulled out, given CPR, and 911 was called around 1:35 am. He was taken to a St. Cloud hospital and on 8/8 (at 2:05 pm) he was pronounced dead.
20. 8/8 – Kandiyohi Co. – drainage ditch – A 13-year-old Kandiyohi boy drowned around 7pm when the ATV that he was riding through tall grass on his parent's property, tipped over and pinned him in 12-18 inches of water in an adjacent drainage ditch. His family discovered the accident about 5-10 minutes after he was submerged and CPR was attempted, but with no results.
21. 8/31 – Hennepin Co. – Twin Lake – A 34-year-old Minneapolis man drowned after a large party when he walked into the water, swam out farther and then went under the water shortly after 11pm. Bystanders found him about 20 feet from shore in 9-12 feet of water and started CPR. He was taken to the hospital where he died the following day.
22. 9/4 – Hennepin Co. – Miss. River - A 50-year-old Minneapolis man drowned around 12 noon, just south of the Broadway Bridge in Minneapolis. He was swimming when he went under. 911 was called at 12:13 pm and the body was recovered by divers about 1:50pm in six feet of water about 35 feet off shore from the west bank of the river.

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23. 9/7 – St. Louis Co. – Wynne Lake – A 62-year-old Aurora man drowned when he was attempting to remove his swim raft from the lake. The pontoon boat he took out to the raft floated away after he was on the swim platform. Although he did not know how to swim, he entered the water from the raft to retrieve the boat around 6:40pm and went under. He was recovered about 7:40pm in 10 feet of water.
24. 9/20 – Ramsey Co. – Battle Creek – A 13-year-old Maplewood boy out walking or wading with friends along the edge of the water drowned at about 8pm. He was apparently swept into the flood-swollen creek and then over a small dam. Assistance was summoned through 911 and a search was started. His body was recovered around 9:30pm, about 75 feet downstream from the dam in 3-4 feet of water.
25. 9/28 – Stearns Co. – residential hot tub – A 33-year old Sartell man drowned in his backyard hot tub. His wife found in face down in the tub around just before 6:30pm, then pulled him out and called for help. Her neighbor heard her and called 911 while she started CPR. Officers and EMS arrived and took over resuscitation, but to no avail.
26. 10/13 – Anoka Co. – Rice Creek – A 60-year-old Spring Lake Park man drowned after falling into the swift water in the creek (located in Fridley) sometime on Oct. 13th. His body was found on Oct. 14th, floating face down in the water against a fallen log.

Summary: 26 non-boating drownings (lowest on record – previous low was 30 in both 1993 & 2004). Location of drowning: 10 in lakes, 6 in rivers, 3 in pools, 2 in ponds or pits, 1 in a drainage ditch, 1 in a bath tub, 1 in a hot tub & 2 in a storm sewer. Two most common age ranges for victims: 18-25 years old and 31-40 years old.