2013 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 - as of 12/31										
Accident Category & Year	**2013**	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Boating Fatalities	**13***	15	16	12	15	12	15	14	23	15
Non-Fatal Boating Accidents *See notes on Page 2*	**65**	72	61	69	70	77	113	102	93	73
Non-Boating Drownings	**30**	40	50	32	28	33	26	49	45	30

*One fatality was on a commercial craft and will not be counted by the U.S. Coast Guard as a recreational boating fatality.

Boating Fatalities

1. 5/26 – Crow Wing Co. – Gull River – A 64-year-old Brainerd man died after his canoe capsized about 2:15 p.m. He was with his 4-year old grandson. It appeared he was attempting to navigate around a tree sticking out of one bank, and struck a tree that had fallen from the other bank. The canoe was sucked under the water and lodged under the tree. The victims were both wearing life jackets, and were found approximately 100 feet downstream. CPR was attempted on victim, but to no avail. He was pronounced dead at 2:54 p.m. The medical examiner determined cause of death to be a heart attack. *(Life Jackets Worn – Yes, by both victims)*

2. 6/7 – Faribault Co. – Bass Lake – A 27-year-old Lanesboro man drowned after the boat he was in capsized. Authorities received a 911 call about 10:44 p.m., and upon arrival, found that two men had been fishing when the boat capsized. One man was able to make it to shore, but the other one did not. The victim's body was recovered shortly before midnight. *(Life Jackets Worn – No, not by victim)*

3 - 4. 6/8 – Lac qui Parle Co. – Lac qui Parle Lake – A 34-year-old Montevideo woman and her 5-year-old daughter died after the boat they were in overturned about 3:00 p.m. A 30-year-old Montevideo man had also been in the boat. The man was able to swim to shore and call police for help. Authorities pulled the girl and the woman from the lake, and all three victims were taken to area hospitals, where the woman and the girl were both pronounced dead. Preliminary investigation shows that high winds and rough water caused the boat to fill with water and overturn. Cold water temperatures, improper life jacket use and non-use of life jackets appear to have contributed to the deaths. *(Life Jackets Worn – yes by one victim, but pfd was too large.)*

5. 6/16 – Isanti Co. – Long Lake – Authorities received a call about 3:15 a.m. from a man who said he was in a boat with a friend who had fallen overboard and had not resurfaced. The victim is a 32-year-old Isanti man whose body was found about 9:00 a.m., in about 8 feet of water, by divers using sonar equipment. (*Life Jacket Worn – No)*

6. 6/22 – Nicollet Co. – Minnesota River – A 50-year-old Watertown, SD man disappeared in the river when his kayak overturned. He and two friends were kayaking when a floating log caused the victim's kayak to overturn. He attempted to hang onto another kayak, but was again knocked off, floated down the river and then went underwater. He was declared legally dead by drowning in October, 2013. His body was recovered on November 9, 2013 at 11:30 a.m., about 14 miles downstream of where he was last seen. *(Life Jacket Worn – No)*

7. 6/26 – Hubbard Co. – Lake Belle Taine – A 30-year-old Minneapolis man was operating a pontoon boat, about 1:44 p.m. with two passengers on board. He moved to the front of the moving pontoon, fell into the lake and was struck by the boat's propeller, severely lacerating his arm. When authorities arrived, he was unconscious. First responders started resuscitation, and he was flown to a Fargo hospital for treatment. He died from his injuries on 6/29. *(Life Jacket Worn – No)*

8. 6/30 – Kandiyohi Co. – Norway Lake – A 66-year-old man was operating a personal watercraft just before 3:30 p.m. when another boat's wake caused the craft to overturn, throwing him and his passenger into the water. The passenger swam to shore. The victim collapsed near the shore and stopped breathing. CPR was performed by first responders, but he was pronounced dead at a local hospital. It was later determined that he died from a heart condition. *(Life Jacket Worn – Yes)*

9.* 7/3 – Winona Co. – Mississippi River – At approximately 6:00 a.m., a tugboat was attempting to enter the lock when it lost power. An extremely swift current pulled the tug over the roller gate and turned it over on its side. It landed at the base of the dam. The operator and one worker were located and removed from the wheelhouse, with minor injuries. The body of a third victim, a 22-year-old La Crosse, WI man, was recovered from the first level of the tug boat about 3:00 p.m. by divers. *(Life Jackets Worn – Yes)*

10 - 11. 9/1 – Lake of the Woods Co. – Lake of the Woods – Three people, a 43-year-old man from Crystal, a 44-year-old man from Champlin and a 35-year-old man from Long Lake, had been out fishing and were heading back to shore at about 6:30 p.m., when they apparently all went unconscious. The 43-year-old man woke up about 4 ½ hours later in the dark on the stalled boat. He started the boat and headed toward shore. He used the spotlight to get the attention of some people on shore and yelled for them to call 911. Authorities arrived about 11:30 p.m. and found the bodies of the 44-year-old and the 35-year-old men. The 43-year-old man was taken to a Grand Forks hospital. The other two men died of carbon monoxide poisoning from a faulty exhaust system. *(Life Jackets Worn – No.)*

12. 10/5 – Hubbard Co. – Crow Wing River – A 23-year-old man was accidentally shot in his duckboat about 4:39 p.m. He was hunting with his friend when a duck flew in from the rear. Both men stood up to fire at the duck, when the friend slipped on the wet floor of the boat. His firearm accidentally discharged, hitting the operator in the head. *(Life Jackets Worn – No)*

13. 10/19 – Clearwater Co. – Lindberg Lake – A 57-year-old Bagley man drowned when the canoe he was using to duck hunt capsized. The Sheriff's Office was notified about 1:30 p.m. of a capsized canoe. They found the victim's body floating nearby. *(Life Jacket Worn – No)*

* This is a commercial craft, and will not be counted by the U.S. Coast Guard as a recreational boating fatality.

Summary: *11 fatal accidents, involving 12 boats – resulting in 13 deaths, 4 additional injuries and $550.00 in property damage. There were 1.61 deaths per 100,000 registered boats, compared to the US rate in 2012 of 5.4. Of the 11 accidents, 10 were single boat accidents – classified as 3 capsizings, 1 fall overboard, 1 collision with a floating object, 1 flooding/swamping, 1 fall in boat (resulting in other occupant being shot while duck hunting), 1 carbon monoxide poisoning (2 victims), and 1 struck by propeller. 1 of the single boat accidents was a commercial craft that struck a fixed object and overturned. The U.S. Coast Guard will not count this one as a recreational boating accident. There was also 1 capsizing caused by a second boat. Life jackets were known to be worn by 4 of the 13 victims. The most common victim age range was 31 - 40 years old. Alcohol was listed as a factor in 3 of the 11 accidents.*

Non-Fatal Boating Accidents (See *NOTES below*)

Capsizing	7
Collision w / fixed/floating object	7
Collision w / another watercraft	20
Collision w / underwater object	3
Collision w/ swimmer, person in water	1
Fall in boat	1
Fall overboard	2
Fire/Explosion	4
Grounding / Hitting Bottom	2
Struck by Propeller	1
Sinking / Flooding / Swamping	4
Water skiing, wake boarding or tubing	11
Other	2
Total reportable non-fatal boating accidents, as of 12/31/13	**65**

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. Reportability threshold for property damage was raised from $500 to $2,000 effective in 2003 to match Coast Guard standard.
3. There is usually a delay in the reporting of non-fatal boating accidents.

Summary:

Non- Boating Drownings

1. 1/18 – Hennepin Co. – Lake Minnetonka – An 8-month-old Minnetrista girl died after being pulled from her car seat after her family's SUV broke through thin ice in a channel. She had been under the water for more than 15 minutes and wasn't breathing when she was rescued. She was taken to a local medical center where she was in extremely critical condition. She died in the early morning on 1/21.

2. 2/1 – Waseca Co. – Lake Elysian – A 72-year-old Janesville man drowned after the vehicle he was driving on the lake slid into a large open area of water. He left to pick up a friend on the lake for lunch, and when he didn't

show up, the friend went looking for him and came upon a spot of open water with vehicle tracks leading to it. 911 was called about 1:20 p.m. and his body was recovered about 3:30 p.m.

3 - 4. 2/2 – Hennepin Co. – Lake Minnetonka – A 31-year-old Maple Grove man and his 87-year-old grandmother drowned when their car broke through the ice on a channel of the lake. The man called 911 about 2:25 p.m. saying his car had broken through and was sinking. First responders were on scene within five minutes, and the two spent less than an hour in the icy water before dive teams were able to remove them. The two were unconscious when rescued and were transported to a Minneapolis medical center where they were pronounced dead just after 7 p.m.

5. 2/16 – Washington Co. – St. Croix River – A 22-year-old snowmobiler died after he went into open water on the river. About noon, it was reported that a snowmobile had gone into the river near Bayport. Several law enforcement agencies responded and he was pulled from the water within 20 minutes of the call to authorities and taken to a St. Paul hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

6. 2/16 – Pine Co. – St. Croix River – Authorities received a call about 6:41 p.m. that a snowmobiler had broken through the ice approximately 4 miles north of the Soderbeck River Landing. When they arrived, they found a partially submerged snowmobile on the edge of a large, open area of turbulent water but were unable to locate any sign of the victim. According to riders accompanying the victim, the group of 4 was traveling on the frozen river in the dark when the victim hit a large patch of open water. The victim was thrown from his machine, and disappeared in the river. It is believed the victim may have been swept under the ice by the current. The search was resumed on 2/17, but had to be suspended due to dangerous conditions. On April 20th, the sheriff's office was contacted by Wisconsin DNR Wardens who had spotted a body floating near the confluence of the Snake River. The medical examiner confirmed that the remains were those of the victim, a 43-year-old Brooklyn Park man.

7. 4/11 – Hennepin Co. – Residential Bathtub – A 47-year-old Crystal woman was found unconscious and not breathing in her water-filled bathtub about 6:06 a.m. 911 was called. The police department arrived and started CPR, but to no avail. The medical examiner ruled the cause of death to be drowning.

8. 4/20 – Hennepin Co. – Residential Bathtub – About 6:45 p.m., a 37-year-old Brooklyn Park man was found partially submerged in his bathtub with the water running. He was pulled from the tub and CPR was given by the person who found him and first responders. Paramedics arrived and the victim was pronounced dead on the scene. The cause of death was ruled to be drowning.

9. 4/21 – Wright Co. – Crow River – A 26-year-old Rockford man was reported missing. Searches of the area turned up a shoe near the river in Rockford. The river was searched daily after that point. On 5/7, at about 6:10 p.m., his body was recovered from the river about 1.7 miles downstream from where the shoe was found. The medical examiner classified the death as an accident and attributed it to freshwater drowning.

10. 5/24 – Sherburne Co. – Elk River – A 2-year-old girl was reported missing from her campsite about 8:20 p.m. She had last been seen playing near a creek that feeds into the river. A search, that included many volunteers and water searches by law enforcement with a State Patrol helicopter, was started and dogs followed her scent to the river's edge on 5/25. Her body was found by dive team members about 2:30 p.m. on 5/26, several hundred yards from her campsite, downstream in the Elk River.

11. 6/7 – Benton Co. – Little Rock Lake (Harris Channel) – A 59-year-old St. Cloud man was a passenger in a motor vehicle accident on a bridge over the channel about 11:30 p.m. After the accident, he was seen along the roadway but by the time law enforcement arrived, he was not around. Law enforcement searched for him that night with canine and helicopter, but were unable to locate him. The following day, the sheriff's office used sonar and his body was located in the lake about 10:40 p.m. Cause of death was ruled as drowning.

12. 6/10 – Crow Wing Co. – Lake Edna – The sheriff's office confirmed the drowning of a 3-year-old Nisswa boy. He was found unresponsive by family members along the shoreline. Area law enforcement responded to the call about 6:30 p.m. Efforts to revive him were unsuccessful and he was declared dead at the scene. It is unknown how he ended up in the water.

13. 6/12 – Hennepin Co. – unnamed pond – The body of a 35-year-old Minneapolis man was found floating in a Minneapolis pond about 12:33 p.m. It is unknown how the man came to be in the pond. The medical examiner ruled the cause of death to be freshwater drowning.

14. 6/16 – Steele Co. – Lake Kohlmier – A 47-year-old Owatonna woman went out for a swim in the lake. She turned around in the middle of the lake to head back and stopped to rest. About 4:55 p.m., she was seen face down in the water and not moving. Witnesses swam out and pulled the victim back to shore. CPR and rescue breathing were performed, but to no avail. The coroner ruled it an accidental drowning.

15. 6/21 – Beltrami Co. – Lake Bemidji – The body of a 63-year-old Bemidji man was found in the lake about 2:30 p.m. He appeared to have fallen in the water, become entangled in brush and debris and drowned. It is unknown what victim was doing before he wound up in the water.

16. 6/25 – Lake Co. – Horse Lake – A 48-year-old Pacific Palisades, CA man was swimming with one other adult and 7 boy scouts, at about 5:06 p.m. Witnesses heard him yell "help!" and he disappeared under water. Witnesses recovered him within several minutes. He was brought to shore and CPR was performed for about 40 minutes prior to arrival of EMS. He was pronounced dead at the local hospital.

17. 7/24 – McLeod Co. – Hook Lake – A 68-year-old Fairmont man drowned while swimming across the lake with his two daughters and granddaughter about 11:35 a.m. As they approached the opposite shore, the victim yelled for assistance. The daughters tried to get a life jacket to him, but were unsuccessful. The victim went underwater and did not surface. Another family member arrived and tried to dive for him, but visibility was not good and he couldn't see anything. A search was performed by a local fire department, as well as several surrounding county sheriff's offices using sonar and dive teams. The victim was located in 13-15 feet of water about 7:30 p.m.

18. 7/29 – St. Louis Co. – Rainy Lake – A 14-year-old boy from Fergus Falls was on a houseboat trip with a group from Fergus Falls. About 6:00 p.m. they were swimming near some anchored houseboats. The victim was last seen diving to the bottom of the lake in about 6-7 feet of water. He was found floating near a houseboat about 6:10 p.m. He was taken by air to a Duluth hospital, where he later died. The cause of death was ruled drowning, possibly caused by carbon monoxide poisoning.

19. 8/1 – Clay Co. – Felton Pits – A 25-year-old Fargo, ND man drowned while swimming in a water filled gravel pit at about 7:00 p.m. He was swimming away from the group he was with. The people in the group lost sight of him. They looked for him, but couldn't find him, so they called 911. He was located about 2 hours later in about 15 feet of water.

20. 8/2 – Cook Co. – Temperance River – A 20-year-old Eden Prairie man and his family had been swimming in a pool in the river, just below the bridge. About 5:15 p.m., he got caught in the current, was pulled in and couldn't get away. He went underwater several times before staying submerged. The victim's brother attempted to help him, but couldn't get close because of the current. The victim was underwater about 4 – 5 minutes before the current released him. His brother and another party were able to get him to shore, where CPR was started. CPR was performed for about 30 minutes before the ambulance arrived. He was transported to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

21. 8/7 – Polk Co. – Red River – The body of an 11-year-old East Grand Forks boy with autism was found in the Red River. He was reported missing by his grandmother about 2:10 p.m. on 8/7. A search party started checking the area around his home after he was reported missing. They searched through the night and resumed about 8:00 a.m. the next day. His body was discovered about 4:00 p.m. on 8/8. It is believed he wandered to the river and fell in.

22. 8/7 – Lake Co. – Makwa Lake – A 29-year-old Denver, CO man was cliff jumping in the BWCAW. On his second jump, about 6:42 p.m., he belly-flopped, went under and never resurfaced. His brother was in a canoe about 20 yards away. He paddled to the area and jumped in the water, but was unable to locate the victim. He was able to use a nearby camper's satellite phone to call authorities. The victim's body was recovered about 10:20 the following morning using an underwater remote operated vehicle.

23. 8/10 – Ramsey Co. – Ferrel's Lake – A 37-year-old Minneapolis man drowned after fleeing police. The officers attempted a traffic stop about 9:30 p.m. The motorist fled and wound up crashing his vehicle into some trees. The man then fled on foot and hid in the water of a local lake. Officers spotted the man about 75 yards from shore, and shouted for him to come back. He was having difficulty staying afloat and the officers went in to get him. They took turns diving, but couldn't find him. About 10:15 p.m., water rescue teams recovered the man and he was taken to a local hospital, where he was pronounced dead about 11:04 p.m.

24. 8/18 – Hennepin Co. – Residential Hot tub – A 57-year-old Brooklyn Park man drowned in the hot tub at his home. His wife came home from work about 7:00 a.m. and found him unresponsive in the water. Authorities arrived and he was pronounced dead. The medical examiner ruled the cause of death to be accidental drowning.

25. 8/20 – Ramsey Co. – Residential Bathtub – A 61-year-old St. Paul man was found in his bathtub with the water running about 11:30 p.m. His wife had last talked to him by phone at about 4:00 p.m. She was unable to contact him later, and went to his home to check on him. She found him in the tub, turned off the water and called 911. The medical examiner ruled the cause of death to be drowning.

26. 8/24 – Itasca Co. – Crystal Lake – A 5-year-old Grand Rapids boy and his sister were on a swim raft about 1:25 p.m. He tried to swim to shore from the raft but went underwater. A witness on shore called authorities. Officers dove and recovered the victim. CPR was immediately started. The victim was transported by ambulance to the hospital, where he later died.

27. 9/22 – Benton Co. – bathtub – A 3-month-old boy drowned after being placed in a bathtub to be cleaned up after a diaper change. The boy was found in the tub about 7:25 a.m., 911 was called and life saving measures were attempted. The boy was pronounced dead at a local hospital.

28.   10/5 – Lac qui Parle Co. – Lac qui Parle River – The body of a 51-year-old Dawson man was found floating in the river about 12:07 p.m. He had been reported missing by his brother earlier that morning. The victim had last been seen on 10/2 about 10:00 p.m. His body was discovered by the victim's housemates. The medical examiner ruled the cause of death to be accidental drowning.

29.   11/9 – Sibley Co. – residential bathtub – An 8-month-old boy drowned when he was left unattended in the bathtub of his home about 5:00 p.m. His mother was bathing her two sons when the older boy started acting up. She removed the older boy and when she returned to the bathroom, the baby was lying outside his bath seat in about six inches of water. She began CPR and called 911. Preliminary autopsy reports indicated the baby had drowned.

30.   12/12 – Hennepin Co. – indoor pool – An 88-year-old Minneapolis man was seen floating in an indoor pool about 4:00 p.m. He was unresponsive when he was pulled from the pool by pool employees. CPR was started and 911 was called. He was taken to a local hospital, where he was later pronounced dead. The medical examiner ruled the death an accidental drowning.

Summary: *30 non-boating drownings. Location: 14 in lakes, 7 in rivers, 6 in a hot tub or bathtub, 2 in a pond or pit, 1 in a swimming pool. The two most common age ranges for victims: 0-5 and 61 & over years old. Victim's ages ranged from 3 months to 88 years old.*