



2015 Minnesota Boating Accident and Drowning Summary

Prepared by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Boat & Water Safety

Summary of Accidents – Compared to Prior Years										
Accident Category and Year	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
Boating Fatalities	18	14	13	15	16	12	15	12	15	14
Non-Fatal Boating Accidents	71	36	65	72	61	71	70	77	113	102
Non-Boating Drownings	35	29	30	40	50	34	28	33	26	49
One 2013 fatality was on a commercial craft and is not counted by the USCG as a recreational boating fatality.										

Boating Fatalities

- 4/26 – Ramsey Co. – Twin Lake – A 27-year-old St. Paul man drowned when the 15' canoe he was in capsized about 11:46 a.m. He went under the water, and did not resurface. He had been with two friends, who were rescued by witnesses. The victim's body was recovered by the county dive team at about 4:00 p.m. (*Life Jackets worn – no*)
- 5/9 – Aitkin Co. – Farm Island Lake – A 77-year-old Aitkin man was fishing with a friend at about 12:09 p.m. They were moving to a new location when a wave hit the 16' motorboat causing him to fall overboard. He was underwater for almost a minute. He was unresponsive after being pulled from the water. Resuscitation was started, but was unsuccessful. (*Life Jacket worn – yes*)
- 5/15 – Otter Tail Co. – Jewett Lake – A 59-year-old California man drowned after falling out of his nonmotorized 12' boat about 10:00 p.m. He was heard calling for help, but family members were not able to reach him before he went under water. A search was started, and his body was found the following morning. (*Life Jacket worn – no*)
- 5/22 – Todd Co. – Lake Fuller – A 32-year-old St. Paul man drowned when the 15' canoe he was in capsized at about 8:05 p.m. He had been underwater for about 25 minutes. He was removed from the water by family members. He was unresponsive and CPR was started. He was transported to the hospital, where he was pronounced deceased. (*Life Jacket worn – unknown (mixed witness reports)*)
- 6/21 – Becker Co. – Many Point Lake – A 67-year-old Omaha, NE man drowned when he fell out of an 18' motorboat about 8:39 a.m. He was fishing with a friend, and they decided to move to a different location. The chair he was sitting in was unstable and he tipped off the boat. He went under water and did not surface. Authorities were called and a search was started. His body was recovered about 7:00 p.m. (*Life Jacket worn – no*)
- 7/4 – Beltrami Co. – Cass Lake – A 50-year-old Eden Prairie woman drowned when she was thrown from the 17.5' motorboat she was riding in, at about 4:10 p.m. The boat struck a large wave, throwing the victim, the operator and another passenger into the water. The operator and other passenger were rescued by witnesses. The victim was unresponsive and not breathing when she was pulled from the water. She was pronounced dead at the hospital. (*Life Jacket worn – no*)
- 7/27 – St. Louis Co. – Lake Vermilion – A 58-year-old Greendale, WI man drowned after he was thrown from his 14' motorboat at about 8:15 p.m. The boat was running in circles around him while he was treading water. Other boaters were able to pull the boat away from him, but he sank under water. His body was recovered by the rescue squad about 10:50 p.m. (*Life Jacket worn – no*)
- 7/31 – Kandiyohi Co. – Golden Pond – A 76-year-old Clara City man drowned when the 14-foot pontoon boat he was fishing from capsized about 8:46 a.m. The men had been fishing when one of the fishing lines snagged. They all moved to that side of the watercraft to un snag it, causing the pontoon to capsize. The victim had been trapped under the watercraft for about 15 minutes by the time authorities arrived. He was retrieved by divers. The two other men on the watercraft were uninjured. (*Life Jacket worn – no*)

9. 8/3 – Otter Tail Co. – Wymer Lake – A 60-year-old Frazee man drowned while taking his family for a pontoon ride at about 2:00 p.m. The 24' watercraft had mechanical issues and he jumped into the water to try to get it back to shore. He started to struggle while swimming. One family member tried to assist him to shore, but was unsuccessful. She swam to the dock to call for help and threw an inner tube out to the victim. Another family member from the boat got him to shore with the help of the tube. He was unresponsive. CPR was started and he was transported to the hospital, where he passed away. *(Life Jacket worn – no)*
10. 8/26 – Crow Wing Co. – Rush Lake – A 21-year-old Eagan man died after apparently falling off a 10' personal watercraft into the water about 4:36 p.m. Witnesses got him out of the water and to shore. He was unresponsive. Resuscitation efforts were started but were unsuccessful. It is unknown what caused him to fall off the watercraft. *(Life Jacket worn – yes)*
11. 9/3 – Hennepin Co. – Mississippi River – A 72-year-old Coon Rapids man died of injuries sustained when his 20.5' watercraft flipped while on the river at about 3:53 p.m. The boat was travelling fast and hit a tree branch floating in the river, which caused the boat to flip. Witnesses pulled the man from the water and CPR was started. Resuscitation efforts were unsuccessful. He was the only occupant of the watercraft. *(Life Jacket worn – unknown)*
12. 9/14 – Lake Co. – Fall Lake – A 74-year-old Ely man was reported missing after he had gone fishing in his 12' motorboat alone on Monday, and didn't return that evening. A multi-agency search was started and his empty boat was found the following morning. His body was located about 4:40 p.m. The cause of death was drowning. *(Life Jacket worn – no)*
- 13-15. 10/3 – Lake of the Woods Co. – Lake of the Woods – Three Baudette men (ages 22, 24 and 28) were reported missing after their 16' motorboat apparently capsized early Saturday morning. The men were last seen leaving in the boat about 11:30 p.m. on Friday. The boaters were reported missing about 1:30 p.m. on Saturday and the capsized boat was found at about 3:30 p.m. A multi-agency search was started Saturday, including several county sheriffs' offices, MN DNR, U.S. Border Patrol, several police departments and a plane provided by U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security based in Grand Forks. The body of the 22-year-old was recovered on 10/9/15. The body of the 24-year-old was recovered on 10/11/15. The body of the 28-year-old was recovered on 4/19/16. *(Life Jackets worn – no)*
16. 10/11 – Hennepin Co. – Lake Minnetonka – A 7-year-old Edina girl died after being overcome by carbon monoxide while riding in a 28' cabin motorboat. She had gone into the cabin area and was found about 10 minutes later, unresponsive. CPR was started and authorities were called. She was transported to the hospital, but could not be revived. A hole was found in the exhaust pipe on the boat. *(Life Jacket worn – unknown)*
17. 10/15 – Pine Co. – Oak Lake – A 57-year-old Sturgeon Lake man drowned after falling out of his 14' motorboat. He and two other men had been duck hunting and were returning to the boat launch. The two passengers were dropped off at the dock to get the vehicle and when they got back, the boat was circling about 200 yards from shore, with no one on board. Authorities were called. The victim's body was recovered about 6:40 p.m. *(Life Jacket worn – no)*
18. 11/13 – Pope Co. – Anderson Lake – A 40-year-old Starbuck man apparently drowned when the canoe he was using to travel to an island to deer hunt apparently capsized. He was reported missing about 5:00 p.m. and a search was started. The canoe was found in about 10 feet of water near where the canoe was put in. The search was ended about 10:30 p.m. and was started again about 7:30 the following morning. The victim's body was found about 9:20 a.m., near the canoe. *(Life Jacket worn – no)*

Summary: There were 16 fatal accidents, involving 16 boats, resulting in 18 deaths. There were no additional injuries, but there was \$8,300 in property damage. There were 2.23 deaths per 100,000 registered boats, compared to the U.S. rate in 2014 of 5.2. All of the fatal accidents involved a single boat. Four of the watercraft were nonmotorized and 12 were motorized. Three of the victims were from the same boat. Seven of the accidents were falls overboard, six were capsizings, one was a collision with a floating object which caused the boat to flip, one was carbon monoxide poisoning, and one involved a victim who left the boat to pull it into shore. Life jackets were known to be worn by only two of the victims out of the total of 18 (11%). The most common age ranges for victims were 51 years and over (9) and 18-40 years old (7). The most common age range for the operator was 51 years and over (8). Alcohol was listed as a factor in seven of the 16 accidents (44%).

Continued on next page.

Non-Fatal Boating Accidents (See NOTES below)

Capsizing	6
Collision w / fixed/floating object	4
Collision w / another watercraft	22
Collision w / underwater object	2
Collision w/ swimmer, person in water	0
Fall in boat	2
Fall overboard	5
Fire/Explosion	5
Grounding / Hitting Bottom	6
Struck by Propeller	3
Sinking / Flooding / Swamping	2
Water skiing, wake boarding or tubing	12
Other	2
Total Non-Fatal Boating Accidents	71

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.

Summary: There were 71 reportable non-fatal boating accidents involving 97 boats and resulting in 65 injuries. There was also \$352,777 in damage to boats and \$19,920 in damage to other property. The most common operator age range was 41-50 years old (20), followed by 31-40 years old (16) and 51-60 years old (15). The most common age ranges for victims with injuries were 13-17 years old (10), 31-40 years old (10) and 61 years and over (10). Alcohol was known to be a factor in 12 of the 71 total non-fatal accidents (17%).

Non-Boating Drownings

- 1-2. 2/1 – Lincoln Co. – Lake Benton – A 29-year-old woman and a 54-year-old man, both from Tyler, drowned after going through the ice in their vehicle. They went ice fishing in the morning, and were reported missing about 6:00 p.m., when they didn't return. A search of the lake was started. The vehicle was found in the lake on 2/3. The woman's body was recovered on 2/7. The male victim's body was recovered on 2/14.
- 3-4. 3/3 – Douglas Co. – Lake Andrew – A 50-year-old Alexandria man drowned when the utility task vehicle (UTV) he was operating went through the ice. He and his 2-year-old grandson were plowing snow on the lake, about 7:30 p.m., when they broke through. They were able to exit the vehicle, but were unable to get out of the water. Authorities were called and divers found the victims and removed them from the water at about 9:25 p.m. They were taken to a local hospital, and then airlifted to hospitals in the Twin Cities. The man was pronounced deceased at the hospital that evening. The 2-year-old was put on life support, but died four weeks later, on March 30.
5. 4/20 – Hennepin Co. – apartment pool – A 34-year-old Plymouth man drowned while swimming in his apartment pool about 7:20 p.m. He was found on the bottom and pulled from the pool, unresponsive. CPR was started, but to no avail. He was pronounced deceased at the scene.
6. 4/30 – Dakota Co. – Vermillion River – A 47-year-old Apple Valley man drowned when he somehow entered the river. He had been sitting on the river bank with a friend. The friend went home about 2:30 p.m., and left the man sitting on the river bank. Witnesses saw the man lying face-up with his hair in the water a little before 3:00 p.m. Authorities were called and when they arrived, the victim was in the middle of the river, submerged in the water. He was removed from the water, CPR was started and he was transported to the hospital, where he later died.
7. 4/30 – Le Sueur Co. – Minnesota River – A 20-year-old Le Sueur woman drowned when she somehow entered the river. The friend she was camping with woke in the night and could not find the victim. A search of the area was started. In the afternoon of May 6, the victim's body was recovered from the river, approximately 2 ½ miles downstream from her last known location.
8. Unk. – Pine Co. – Mud Lake – The body of a 57-year-old Aitkin man was found floating in the lake on 5/12, during an air search of the area where his car was found. He had been reported missing in Aitkin County two weeks prior to being found. It is unknown when he entered the lake.
9. 5/15 – Becker Co. – Little Detroit Lake – A 33-year-old Detroit Lakes man had been missing for about a week. Authorities started searching the lake with the help of a plane, and found the victim's body near the swim area at about 3:11 p.m. on 5/15. It is unknown when he went in the water.
10. 5/16 – Stearns Co. – Clearwater Lake – A 73-year-old Bethel man drowned when he was apparently exiting his docked boat. He lost his balance and fell between the boat and the dock and was apparently unable to get himself out of the water. He was found in the water about 7:30 a.m.

11. 5/16 – Washington Co. – residential bathtub – A 44-year-old man drowned, about 11:15 a.m., while taking a bath. His wife returned home and found him in the tub, underwater. Authorities were called and the wife started CPR. Paramedics arrived but were unable to revive the victim. He was pronounced at the scene.
12. 5/25 - Ramsey Co. – abandoned apartment pool – A 7-year-old St. Paul boy drowned when he fell in rainwater in an abandoned pool. His brother tried to rescue him but also slipped in the water. The fire department arrived and pulled both boys out. The victim died at the hospital on 6/18/15.
13. 6/8 – Stearns Co. – residential pool – A 2-year-old boy drowned when he fell into a swimming pool. He was found about 12:45 p.m. by a family member, who pulled him from the pool. She called 911 and started CPR. When authorities arrived, they took over CPR. He was transported to the hospital, where he died.
14. Unk. – Washington Co. – St. Croix River – The body of a 26-year-old St. Paul man was found along the shore of the river on 6/12/15. It is unknown when, where and how he entered the river.
15. 6/14 – Hennepin Co. – apartment pool – A 3-year-old girl had been swimming with friends and family members. The group went home about 8:30 p.m. and it was discovered that the girl was missing. They searched for her, and when they didn't locate her, they called the authorities. The search continued, and her body was found at the bottom of the cloudy pool at about 1:30 a.m. on 6/15.
16. Unk. – Ramsey Co. – Mississippi River – The body of a 27-year-old man was found in the river at the Ford Dam. It is unknown when or how he came to be in the river. The cause of death was determined to be drowning.
17. Unk. – Anoka Co. – unnamed drainage ditch – A 46-year-old Coon Rapids man drowned in a drainage ditch. His body was found by a lawn maintenance worker on 6/19. It is unknown how he came to be in the water, or how long he had been there. He was last seen on 6/2/15.
18. 6/24 – Olmsted Co. – wash basin – A 1-year-old Dover boy was playing outside with his siblings. They were called inside but he wasn't with the other kids. He was found outside in a water basin used to rinse feet. CPR was started and he was airlifted to a Rochester hospital, where he was in critical condition. He died at the hospital on 7/5/15.
19. Unk. – Washington Co. – Mississippi River – The body of a man was discovered in the river on 7/1/15. He had been there for quite a while. He was later identified by the medical examiner as a 48-year-old St. Paul man. It is unknown when, where and how he entered the river.
20. 7/4 – Rice Co. – private pond – A 20-year-old Woodbury man drowned while swimming in a pond about 5:17 p.m. He was swimming to shore after using a zip line, when he went under water. His friends called 911. Divers found the victim at about 6:30 p.m. in 14 feet of water. CPR was unsuccessful.
21. 7/5 – Chisago Co. – water feature in yard – A 23-month-old girl was playing in the yard while her family did yard work. Her father went in the garage to put some tools away, and when he came out, he didn't see her. He started looking for her and found her within about 5 minutes in the water feature in the front yard. CPR was started and she was flown to the hospital. She died at the hospital on 7/28/15.
22. 7/7 – Cass Co. – Ten Mile Lake – A 49-year-old Kalispell, MT man drowned about 5:15 p.m. He was swimming with friends when he went under. He was under for about 5 minutes, and was pulled from the water. CPR was started. When authorities arrived, they took over resuscitation efforts, but were unsuccessful.
23. 7/23 or 24 – Stearns Co. – Mississippi River – A 6-year-old St. Cloud boy was reported missing. He had been last seen at about 8:35 p.m. on 7/23. A search of the area was started. The following morning, the search was focused on the river, where the boy's scooter was found. His body was located on 7/24 at about 11:20 a.m. by dive team members.
24. 8/1 – Ramsey Co. – Gervais Lake – A 59-year-old man drowned while swimming across the lake about 3:00 p.m. He was swimming with another man, who made it across. When the other man turned around, he couldn't find the victim. Authorities were called and a search was started. The man's body was recovered about 2:35 p.m. the following day.
25. 8/4 – Chisago Co. – St. Croix River – A 20-year-old North Branch man drowned while swimming in the river, about 3:44 p.m. He started having trouble in the current and his friends tried to get him to shallow water. He was unresponsive and CPR was started. Authorities arrived and continued CPR, but were unsuccessful. Efforts were stopped at about 4:42 p.m.
26. 8/5 – Scott Co. – oxidation pond at water treatment plant – A 56-year-old man drowned in an oxidation pond at the wastewater treatment plant where he was an employee. The incident occurred sometime between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. He had been seen at lunchtime by co-workers, but hadn't been seen all afternoon. Co-workers tried to contact him, but received no response. Authorities were called and his body was recovered from the pond about 5:05 p.m.

27. 8/6 – Ramsey Co. – Rice Creek – An 11-year-old New Brighton girl drowned when she jumped off a bridge, into the creek, with two friends about 3:20 p.m. The friends made it to shore, but the victim went under. She was underwater about 30 minutes before being rescued by first responders. She was transported to the hospital where she was in critical condition. She died about three hours later.
28. 8/16 – Hennepin Co. – Lake Harriet – A 43-year-old Minneapolis man drowned while swimming to a swim raft at about 6:27 p.m. He went under and didn't resurface. Witnesses tried to find him while authorities were called. The dive team started searching but had to suspend the search because of lightning in the area. The search continued through the night, and the victim's body was recovered by divers in 16 feet of water at about 2:00 a.m. the following day.
29. Unk. – Beltrami Co. – Mississippi River – A 65-year-old man was found floating in the river near shore on 9/5/15. He had been camping nearby, and somehow fell in. It is unknown when he went into the river, but he had last been seen alive about 12 days before his body was found.
30. 9/10 – Washington Co. – residential pool – A 70-year-old woman drowned while swimming in her backyard pool. She was found unresponsive in the pool about 5:30 p.m. She was pulled from the pool and CPR was started, but was unsuccessful.
31. 10/3 – Wright Co. – Mississippi River – A 23-year-old Monticello man drowned after falling into the river. He was last seen about 1:15 a.m., and was reported missing when he failed to return to his hotel after a wedding. A search was started in the area, including a water search by the county sheriff's office. The victim's body was found in the river on 10/8 at about 11:30 a.m.
32. Unk. – Ramsey Co. – Rush Lake – A 32-year-old Mounds View man was reported missing on 9/7/15. His body was found floating in the lake by a kayaker on 11/2/15. It is unknown when or how he entered the lake.
33. Unk. – Douglas Co. – Lake Mary slough – A 63-year-old Kensington man drowned while apparently tending his traps. He had not been seen for a couple of weeks so authorities were called for a welfare check on 11/13/15. He was not at his home, but it was discovered that he was a trapper, so a conservation officer checked a local slough. The victim's body was found partially submerged in the water, near some trapping equipment and a kayak. It is unknown when he actually went in the water.
34. 11/21 – Ramsey Co. – residential bathtub – A 67-year-old St. Paul man drowned while bathing in his apartment. He was found in the water-filled tub by a contractor who had come to do some work in the apartment.
35. 11/27 – Blue Earth Co. – slough SE of Duck Lake – A 38-year-old Centralia, IL man had been on a work crew and was staying in Madison Lake. He was reported missing when he didn't show up for work after the Thanksgiving holiday. A ground and aerial search was conducted. His body was located in the slough by helicopter on 12/9/15.

Summary: There were 35 non-boating drownings. Location of drowning: nine in lakes, nine in rivers, four in swimming pools (one was abandoned), two in bathtubs, two in ponds, two in sloughs, one in a creek, one in a drainage ditch, one in a water feature in a yard, and one in a washbasin. The most common age range for victims was 41-50 years old (7) closely followed by 0-5 years old (6) and 61 years and over (5). Victim's ages ranged from 1 to 73 years old.