## DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# **2018 Minnesota Boating Accident and Drowning Summary**

Prepared by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Boat and Water Safety as of 8/27/19

## Summary of Accidents – as of 12/31 each year

Accident Category and Year	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
<b>Boating Fatalities</b>	14	12	18	18	14	12	15	16	12	15
Non-Fatal Boating Accidents	64	92	79	71	36	65	72	61	71	70
Non-Boating Drownings	40	31	40	35	29	30	40	50	34	28

## Summary of Accidents for the Entire Year – January - December

Accident Category and Year	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
<b>Boating Fatalities</b>	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

## 2018 Statewide Summary – as of 12/31/18

#### **Boating Fatalities**

- 4/28 or 4/29 Wabasha Co. Lake Pepin A 31-foot auxiliary sailboat was found, with the motor running, at a resort near Lake City about 9:30 a.m. on 4/29. The 61-year-old Pepin, WI man who owned the boat had apparently fallen overboard and was not found. The last contact with the man was about 9:40 p.m. the previous day. It was not unusual for him to spend the night on his boat. On 7/14 and 8/18, human remains were found on the shore of the river and were later identified as the sailboat operator by the medical examiner's office. (*Life jacket worn* – no)
- 5/19 Hubbard Co. Hart Lake A 4-year-old Northwood, IA boy drowned when the kayak he was riding in with his father (see number 3) capsized about 1:25 p.m. It was windy and there were choppy waves. Both went into the water and neither resurfaced. A search was started and the boy was found soon after. CPR was started and he was flown to the hospital. He died the following day. (Life jacket worn no)
- 5/19 Hubbard Co. Hart Lake A 42-year-old Northwood, IA man drowned when the kayak he and his son (see number 2) were in capsized about 1:25 p.m. It was windy and there were choppy waves. Both went into the water and neither resurfaced. A search was started for the man, but was suspended overnight. His body was found about 11:00 a.m. the following day. (*Life jacket worn no*)
- 4. 6/3 Swift Co. Lake Oliver A 60-year-old Appleton man drowned after falling overboard from his 16-foot open motorboat. His boat was found abandoned on shore the night of 6/3 with the motor in gear and his fishing equipment still on board. His body was found about noon on 6/5, about ¼ mile east of where the boat was found. (Life jacket worn no)
- 5. 6/4 Wabasha Co. Lake Pepin An 86-year-old Chicago, IL man drowned after his 15-foot open motorboat capsized at about 2:05 p.m. The victim and two passengers had been fishing and when they

were heading back to the landing, they started taking on water. The wind and rough water caused them to capsize. They were in the water about 30 minutes before another boat came by and got them out of the water. CPR was started on the unresponsive victim. He was pronounced deceased at the hospital. (Life jacket worn – not by victim – passengers were wearing them)

- 6/9 Lake Co. Perent Lake A 31-year-old Coon Rapids man drowned after his canoe capsized about 9:00 p.m. in the BWCA. The other person in the canoe was able to swim to a rock, but the victim didn't make it to shore. His body was found on 6/11. (*Life jackets worn no*)
- 7. 6/12 Cass Co. Hay Lake A 69-year-old Canton, GA man drowned after falling overboard, about 1:30 p.m., from the 16-foot motorboat he was a passenger in. The operator lost control of the tiller handle, causing a sharp turn, throwing both occupants into the water. The operator was able to get back in the boat but the victim was unable to stay afloat and went under water. His body was recovered about three hours later. (*Life jackets worn no*)
- 8. 7/7 Pine Co. Sturgeon Lake A 28-year-old Moose Lake man drowned when he jumped out of the 17-foot motorboat he was a passenger in to try to retrieve something that had blown out of the boat. The operator threw a life jacket toward him, but the passenger couldn't get it. He then jumped in the water to get the passenger, but was unable to hold on to the passenger and stay afloat. He had to let go and the passenger went under. The man's body was recovered on 7/9/18. (Life jackets worn no)
- 9. 7/10 Cook Co. Sawbill Lake A 74-year-old Minneapolis man drowned after his 17-foot canoe capsized about 1:00 p.m. He was canoeing while the rest of the camping party was swimming. They heard a splash and saw the man trying to right his tipped canoe. He tried several times and then they couldn't see him. Two of the campers paddled their canoe out to help, but couldn't find him. Authorities found him in the water at 4:00 p.m. (*Life jacket worn no*)
- 10. 8/15 Washington Co. Lost Lake A 67-year-old Mahtomedi man drowned after somehow entering the water while fishing from his 6-foot inflatable boat. County authorities received a call regarding a partially submerged boat in the lake. The boat had oars and a small electric motor. A deputy found the man in the water and started lifesaving efforts, to no avail. He was pronounced deceased on scene. (Life jacket worn – yes)
- 11. 8/31 Cass Co. Hunter Lake A 74-year-old Annandale man drowned after falling overboard from his 12-foot motorboat while fishing. A witness heard the man calling for help about 5:05 p.m. but when he arrived at the scene, the man was on the bottom of the lake in about 10-feet of water. He was pulled from the water and taken to the dock and CPR was started. Ambulance was on scene and called time of death. (Life jacket worn no)
- 12. 9/2 Itasca Co. Big Jessie Lake A 77-year-old Sturgeon Lake man drowned after falling overboard from his 12-foot motorboat at about 2:30 p.m. He was fishing and reached over to grab his lure which was caught in the weeds, causing him to fall overboard. The boat continued forward, and the passenger got to the motor and turned the boat around. She threw a life jacket to him but that was unsuccessful. She told him to grab the front of the boat, but he couldn't. He went under the water. The passenger got to shore and called 911. The man was located just after 5:00 p.m. by the county dive team. (Life jacket worn no)
- 9/15 Hennepin Co. Lake Minnetonka A 40-year-old Shorewood man drowned after falling overboard from his 19-foot motorboat. The boat was found circling just before 6:00 p.m. with no one onboard. A search of the lake using sonar was started. His body was found the following day at about 10:00 a.m. It is unknown what caused the man to fall overboard. (*Life jacket worn no*)
- 14. 9/22 Anoka Co. Peltier Lake A 64-year-old St. Paul man drowned after falling overboard from his 16-foot motorboat about 6:40 p.m. Witnesses saw the boat lunge forward and the man fall out. The boat circled him and he went under the water. He was located using side-scan sonar and his body was recovered by sheriff's office divers at about 10:30 p.m. (Life jacket worn – no)

**Summary:** There were 13 fatal recreational watercraft accidents, involving 13 boats, resulting in 14 deaths. There were no additional injuries, but there was \$4000.00 in damage to boats. There were 1.71 deaths per 100,000 registered boats, compared to the U. S. rate of 5.3 in 2018. All of the fatal accidents involved a single boat. The accidents are classified as: falls overboard (8), capsizing (4) and "other" (1) (person left unanchored boat to retrieve object that blew out). Seven of the watercraft had single occupants, 5 boats had two people on board and 1 had three people on board. Four of the deaths involved nonmotorized craft (2 people in one kayak and 2 people in cances in separate incidents), and 10 involved motorized craft (including 8 open motorboats, 1 auxiliary sailboat, and one inflatable rubber boat). The boat lengths included: 16-18 feet (6), 12 feet and under (4), 13-15 feet (1), 19-20 feet (1), and 27-40 feet (1). Of the 13 watercraft involved, 10 were known to have life jackets on board, but a life jacket was only worn by one victim (7%). The most common age ranges for victims were 61 years and over (8), 31-40 years (2), 51-60 years (1), 41-50 years (1), 26-30 years (1) and 0-5 years (1). Eleven of the victims were the boat operator. Three victims were passengers (ages 4, 28 and 67 years old). Alcohol was listed as a factor in three of the 13 accidents (23%).

### Non-Fatal Boating Accidents

Type of Accident	Number
Capsizing	3
Collision with a fixed or floating object	10
Collision with another watercraft	21
Collision with an underwater object	2
Collision with swimmer or person in water	1
Fall in boat	2
Falls overboard	4
Fire/Explosion	2
Grounding, Hitting Bottom	0
Struck by Propeller	4
Sinking / Flooding / Swamping	4
Water-skiing, wake boarding or tubing mishap	7
Other	4
Total reportable non-fatal boating accidents as of 12/31/18	64

#### 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 64 reportable non-fatal boating accidents, involving 94 boats, resulting in 56 injuries. There was also \$295,585 in damage to boats and \$132,875 in damage to other property. The most common operator age ranges were 51-60 years (16) tied with 61 years and over (16). They were followed by 41-50 years (15), 31-40 years (14), 18-25 years (10), 13-17 years (6) and 26-30 years (5). There were 12 boats where the operator age was unknown. The most common age ranges for persons with injuries were 13-17 years (13), 31-40 years (8), 41-50 years (8), 61 years and over (7), 18-25 years (6), 51-60 years (5), 6-12 years (5), and 26-30 years (4). Alcohol was known to be a factor in 8 of the 64 total non-fatal accidents (12.5%). Life jackets were known to be worn by 28 of the 56 persons with injuries.

## Non-Boating Drownings

 3/3 – Hennepin Co. – apartment hot tub – A 52-year-old Minneapolis woman drowned in the hot tub in her apartment building. She was found face down in the hot tub by another resident at about 11:00 p.m. He got her out of the hot tub, started CPR and called 911. She was pronounced deceased on scene. It is unknown what time the incident actually occurred.

- 2. 4/23 St. Louis Co. Prairie Lake An 82-year-old Wright, MN man drowned when the UTV he was a passenger on fell through the ice at about 1:50 p.m. He and his son (operator) were fishing and when they were leaving, the UTV didn't want to move in the slush on the ice when the operator pressed the gas. The UTV then went through the ice. The operator pulled himself out of the water and onto the ice, but was unable to pull his father out. Fire department personnel pulled him out about 45 minutes later. EMTs and Lifeflight nurses worked on getting him back, to no avail.
- 3. 4/28 Stearns Co. Watab River South Fork A 39-year-old Royalton man drowned after somehow entering the river. He had fled police after a traffic stop on 4/28, and was reported missing on 5/2. His body was located in the river on 5/3.
- 4. 4/28 Mille Lacs Co. Rum River The body of a 46-year-old Princeton woman was found in the river on 5/20/18 by a person in a canoe. She had been reported missing on 4/28 at about 8:45 p.m. Daily searches had yielded no results. It is unknown what time or how she came to be in the river.
- 5. 5/25 Dakota Co. Mississippi River The body of a 29-year-old St. Paul man was found in the river by a boater at 4:10 p.m. It is unknown how or when he came to be in the river.
- 6. 5/28 Crow Wing Co. Rush Lake A 2-year-old Minneapolis boy was found unresponsive in the lake about 10:00 a.m., near the dock, at a family member's cabin. It was noticed he was unaccounted for and his mother checked the lake. She pulled him from the water and started CPR. He was transported to a hospital in Minneapolis, where he passed away on 6/2/18.
- 7. 5/28 Goodhue Co. Cannon River A 40-year-old St. Paul man drowned after slipping off a steep bank into the river while fishing at about 11:35 a.m. He did not know how to swim. He went under and did not resurface. The current was strong. Authorities were called and a search was started. The man's body was found caught in a submerged tree just before 1:00 p.m., almost a mile from where the incident occurred.
- 5/30 Mille Lacs Co. Lake Mille Lacs A 75-year-old Little Canada man drowned after somehow entering the water. A neighbor found him about 1:30 p.m., floating face down in the water near the man's cabin. Authorities were called. He was pronounced deceased at the scene. It is unknown how he came to be in the water, or what time the incident occurred.
- 9. 6/1 Wright Co. residential pool A 3-year-old boy was found unconscious in the pool at about 2:50 p.m. He had been playing in the yard while older children were swimming. They left the pool and when they came back, the victim was on the bottom of the pool. They got him out and called for help. Resuscitation was started and he was airlifted to the hospital, where he died on 6/3.
- 10. 6/7 Crow Wing Co. Gilbert Lake A 66-year-old Brainerd man drowned while swimming to retrieve his drifting boat at the launch area. A witness heard screams for help and saw the man struggling to swim. He then went under. 911 was called and the man was retrieved from the water. Resuscitation was started, to no avail.
- 11. 6/18 Cass Co. Upper Menton Lake A 76-year-old Remer man drowned while swimming with his wife near their dock at about 6:30 p.m. He began to struggle and went under water. He did not resurface. He was recovered by first responders in about 5 feet of water.
- 12. 6/27 Clay Co. Buffalo River State Park Swim Area A 9-year-old Moorhead girl drowned while swimming at the park with a group. When the safety whistle blew, her friend informed the lifeguard and a chaperone that she couldn't find the girl. The lifeguards called for her and the trails were checked. When the girl didn't come forward, the swimming area was checked. She was located in 6-8 feet of water. Lifesaving efforts were unsuccessful.
- 13. 6/29 Waseca Co. Lake Elysian A 17-year-old Waseca boy drowned while he was swimming and jumping around an inner tube with friends about 3:45 p.m. He jumped into the water and did not resurface. Authorities were called and a search was started. He was located in about 7 feet of water at about 5:08 p.m. Resuscitation was attempted, without success.

- 14. 7/7 Mower Co. unused residential pool A 6-year-old Hartland boy drowned after falling into an unused swimming pool at a family gathering. He and another child had been seen with a net, attempting to catch frogs in the pool behind the house about an hour before the incident. He was later seen playing in front of the house where everyone was gathered. Later, someone mentioned they didn't know where he was and a search was started. The net was found in the pool and was used to find the boy in the dark green water at about 8:52 p.m. Lifesaving efforts were started, to no avail.
- 15. 7/8 Crow Wing Co. Adney Lake A 60-year-old St. Paul man drowned while swimming from his anchored pontoon boat about 3:00 p.m. He began to tire and his wife threw a life jacket to him. He missed catching it and began to panic. She jumped in and started to swim him backwards to the boat, which was too far away. He went limp, she lost her grasp on him and he went under. The search for him was called off due to approaching storms. Divers located him the following day in heavy vegetation.
- 16. 7/17 Dodge Co. Naylor's Pond A 7-year-old Owatonna boy drowned while swimming at the pond. He was there with his brother and his friend. The friend's mother was watching the boys play in the water at about 4:10 p.m. and looked away for a minute. When she looked back she only saw two boys. Search teams arrived and searched the land area as well as the pond. The Olmsted County Dive Team arrived and located his body in 10 feet of water just before 8:00 p.m.
- 17. 7/20 Crow Wing Co. Armour Mine Pit #2 A 13-year-old Minneapolis boy was playing with a Frisbee on the lakeshore of the mine pit about 3:00 p.m. It had just rained and the inlet creek near him was running fast. The Frisbee went into the water and the boy went to get it. He was swept away by the current into the drop off. His father attempted to get him, but the boy panicked and took the father under. The boy went underwater and didn't resurface. A search was started by authorities and the boy was found in 92-feet of water about noon the following day.
- 18. 7/21 Wright Co. Limestone Lake A 27-year-old Sartell man drowned about 3:00 p.m. while swimming to retrieve the tube he had been floating on. He either jumped or fell off the tube and the wind blew the tube away from him. He swam to catch it in a weedy area and went under water. He was under for 2-3 minutes before his father, who was floating on a separate tube, could reach him and attempt to keep the man's head above water. A bystander brought a boat and pulled the man in and CPR was started. He was pronounced deceased at the hospital.
- 19. 7/23 Dakota Co. Vermillion River A 30-year-old St. Paul man drowned while attempting to swim across the river. He had been at the river fishing with a friend when he decided to go in the river and swim at about 8:45 p.m. He made it about half way, began to struggle and submerged. Authorities were called and a search was started. His body was located at about 2:00 a.m. on 7/24.
- 20. 7/25 Beltrami Co. Lake Bemidji The body of a 32-year-old Cass Lake woman was found floating in the lake about 12:18 p.m. She had been seen sitting with a friend on the dock at the lake at about 2:00 a.m. It is unknown what time or how she entered the water.
- 21. 8/10 Pine Co. Grindstone River A 75-year-old Hinckley man was found in the river by a passerby, near the reservoir dam, just after 10:00 a.m. A short time later, he was reported missing when he didn't return home from his walk. It is unknown where or what time he entered the water.
- 22. 8/10 Wright Co. Buffalo Lake A 75-year-old Buffalo man drowned after apparently falling from the dock. His body was found floating near the dock about 6:30 p.m. He may have been in an electric scooter while fishing from the dock when it somehow tipped, putting him in the water. The incident was unwitnessed, so it is unknown when or how he came to be in the water.
- 23. 8/12 Dakota Co. residential pool A 66-year-old Eagan man drowned while swimming alone in a friend's pool. The friend's wife had left home for about 30 minutes and when she came home, she did not see the man in the pool. She went out to check and found him on the bottom in the deep end. She called 911 and went to a neighbor to get help. The man was removed from the pool and CPR was started. He was transported to the hospital by ambulance while CPR continued, to no avail.

- 24. 8/12 Hennepin Co. Lake Bde Maka Ska A 52-year-old Minneapolis man drowned while swimming with a friend in a marked swim area. He was near the swim platform when he suddenly went under water. He was under for less than a minute when lifeguards pulled him from the water. CPR was started and he was taken to the hospital, where he later died.
- 25. 8/14 Washington Co. Square Lake A 51-year-old Shoreview man drowned while scuba diving. A witness reported that the man's diving gear was leaking air. When the man attempted to fix it, the air came rushing out and he sank in the lake. Resuscitation efforts were unsuccessful.
- 26. 8/15 Hennepin Co. residential pool An 11-year-old Brooklyn Center boy drowned in an aboveground residential pool. He was found on the bottom of the pool about 3:10 p.m. and was removed unconscious and not breathing. CPR was started and he was transported to the hospital, where he died several days later. It is not known what he was doing in the pool or what time he entered the water.
- 27. 8/16 Hennepin Co. creek in MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge The body of a 46-year-old Deephaven man was found in the creek by a person walking on the path. It is unknown when, where or how he entered the creek. The cause of death was determined to be drowning.
- 28. 8/18 Cass Co. Ponto Lake A 37-year-old Sheboygan, WI woman drowned while swimming. She was found motionless in shallow water by a witness and pulled to shore. Resuscitation was started and authorities were called. She was transported by Aircare to a St. Cloud hospital. She died the following day.
- 29. 8/21 St. Louis Co. Twin Lake An 18-year-old exchange student from Egypt drowned while he was visiting MN with a friend from Ohio, where the student was going to college. They were swimming at the cabin and the student was wearing a life jacket since he was not a good swimmer. He thought he could swim to the floating dock without the life jacket and took it off. He got to the dock and went under water. The friend tried to find him in the water, but couldn't see him. Authorities were called and they tried to revive him, without success. He had been under water for about 30 minutes.
- 30. 9/3 St. Louis Co. Miners Lake An 18-year old Detroit, MI man drowned while swimming with friends. They were in a shallow area that sharply becomes deep water. The man was not able to swim very well and got into deep water where he could not touch bottom. The friends saw him struggling and attempted to keep him above water, but they were unable to stay above themselves, and had to let go. He was recovered from about 18 feet of water by use of an ROV robot about 30 minutes later. Lifesaving efforts were unsuccessful.
- 31. 9/10 Dakota Co. indoor pool A 55-year-old Huron, SD man drowned while swimming alone in the pool at his sister's apartment complex. He was found floating in the deep end of the pool by another resident about 6:20 a.m. He had accessed the pool area just after 6:00 a.m. The incident was unwitnessed.
- 32. 9/15 Dakota Co. Crystal Lake A 40-year-old Waterloo, IA man drowned while swimming in the lake. He was reported missing on 9/16. He had last been seen swimming in the lake. His body was recovered from the lake, near the swim area, at about 1:30 a.m. on 9/18.
- 33. 10/12 Hennepin Co. Shingle Creek A 33-year-old Minneapolis man drowned after somehow entering the creek. A passerby saw the body lying in the creek about 9:45 a.m. and called authorities. It is unknown how, when or where the man entered the creek.
- 34. 11/11 Ramsey Co. residential bathtub An 81-year-old Arden Hills woman drowned in her bathtub. Her son had last talked to her at about 10:00 a.m. He tried calling throughout the day and couldn't reach her. He went to her house and found her partially submerged in her bathtub.
- 35. 11/28 McLeod Co. Winsted Lake A 52-year-old Winsted man went through the ice on his snowmobile at about 6:10 p.m. and drowned. He had traveled across the area prior to 4:00 p.m. that day. At about 6:00 p.m. he headed back the other way, west of the original path. It led to thin ice/open

water and the snowmobile submerged. The snowmobile and the man's body were located the following day and his body was recovered about 2:15 p.m.

- 36. 12/9 Morrison Co. Fish Trap Lake A 71-year-old Cushing man drowned when the side-by-side ATV he was operating went through thin ice. He had a passenger at the time. They had been ice fishing and were overdue. The operator's wife called authorities about 6:30 p.m. when she couldn't contact him. Deputies found broken ice and open water along a pressure ridge. The passenger was found floating near the edge of the ice (see number 37). The operator was located the following day about 12:45 p.m., in 40 feet of water, trapped in the submerged ATV.
- 37. 12/9 Morrison Co. Fish Trap Lake A 68-year-old Cushing man drowned when the side-by-side ATV he was a passenger in went through thin ice. The operator's wife contacted authorities about 6:30 p.m., when they were overdue from ice fishing. Deputies found broken ice and open water along a pressure ridge. The passenger was found floating near the edge of the ice just before 10:00 p.m. He was brought to shore and life saving measures were attempted, but were unsuccessful. The operator was located the following day (see number 36).
- 38. 12/13 Washington Co. residential bathtub A 55-year-old Lake Elmo woman drowned while in her bathtub. She was found on 12/13 by her son who had not heard from her for several days. It is unknown when the incident actually occurred.
- 39. 12/24 St. Louis Co. White Iron Lake A 60-year-old Cloquet woman drowned after the snowmobile she was a passenger on broke through a half inch of ice near Beargrease Island. She and the operator (see number 40) were last seen together on 12/21. The operator was reported missing when he did not show up for work on 12/24. A snowmobile was missing from the operator's cabin and it was believed they left the cabin on the snowmobile. A search was started and the woman's body was found floating in the lake, deceased, on 12/24 at about 11:30 p.m. She had been wearing a flotation type jacket at the time of the incident.
- 40. 12/24 St. Louis Co. White Iron Lake A 60-year-old Esko man drowned after the snowmobile he was operating broke through a half inch of ice near Beargrease Island. He and his passenger (see number 39) were last seen together on 12/21. He was reported missing when he did not show up for work on 12/24. A search was started and it was determined a snowmobile was missing from the operator's cabin. It was believed they left the cabin on the snowmobile. The man's body was found submerged on 12/26 at about 2:00 p.m., in the immediate vicinity of where the snowmobile had broken through.

**Summary:** There were 40 non-boating drownings. Location of drowning: lake (22), river/creek (8), pool/hot tub (6), pond/ditch (2) and bathtub (2). The most common age range for victims was 61 years and over (10), followed by 51-60 years (9), 31-40 years (6), 6-12 years (4), 26-30 years (3), 41-50 years (2), 0-5 years (2), 13-17 years (2), and 18-25 years (2). Victims' ages ranged from 2 years to 82 years. Alcohol use was listed in 27.5% of non-boating drownings.