DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Preliminary 2020 Minnesota Boating Accident and Drowning Summary

Prepared by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Boat and Water Safety as of 2/19/2021

Summary of Accidents – as of 12/31 each year

Accident Category and Year	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Boating Fatalities	16	10	14	12	18	18	14	12	15	16
Non-Fatal Boating Accidents	90	90	64	92	79	71	36	65	72	61
Non-Boating Drownings	49	35	40	31	40	35	29	30	40	50

There is usually a delay in the reporting of non-fatal accidents.

Summary of Accidents for the Entire Year – January - December

Accident Category and Year	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Boating Fatalities	10	14	12	18	18	14	12	15	16	12
Non-Fatal Boating Accidents	90	64	92	79	71	36	65	72	61	71
Non-Boating Drownings	35	40	31	40	35	29	30	40	50	34

2020 Statewide Summary – as of 12/31/2020

Boating Fatalities

1. 5/4 – Hennepin Co. – Lake Minnetonka – A 64-year-old Chanhassen man drowned after he was thrown overboard from the 14-foot motorboat he was a passenger in. The two occupants were thrown overboard, about 10:24 a.m., when the boat hit choppy waves. The boat started circling. The operator was able to swim to a buoy and was picked up by another boat. The passenger sank below the water. His body was located at about 12:40 p.m. *(Life jackets worn – no)*

2. 5/19 – Cook Co. – Tuscarora Lake – A 29-year-old Noblesville, IN man drowned after the canoe he and two others were in capsized. He had been fishing from shore and his line got tangled. The three went out in the canoe to untangle it and stayed to fish. They drifted away from the campsite and then somehow capsized. They all swam in different directions. Two of the occupants made it to safety and yelled for help all night and into the morning. A canoe came by and went to get help. The third man hadn't made it out of the water. His body was recovered just before 3:30 p.m. on 5/20. *(Life jackets worn – yes by all three)*

3. 5/24 – Aitkin Co. – Long Lake – A 62-year-old Bloomington man drowned after the kayak he was fishing from somehow capsized. Another boater, who had trolled past the kayaker about 15 minutes previously, heard shouts for help. They were from another person who had seen the man lying face-down in the lake, still seated in his kayak which was floating on its side. The man was brought to shore where CPR was started, to no avail. *(Life jacket worn – yes)*

4. 6/6 – Wabasha Co. – Zumbro River – An 11-year-old Zumbrota boy drowned after the kayak he and his grandfather were in capsized. The kayak had become stuck in the strong current and was pushed toward the bank of the river, where it became entangled in submerged trees and flipped over. The boy was ejected from the kayak and was pushed under the water into the submerged trees. *(Life jacket worn – yes)*

5. 6/7 – Washington Co. – Forest Lake – A 64-year-old Hugo man drowned after jumping off his drifting pontoon boat. He was holding onto the boat on the upwind side when a large wave hit the pontoon causing him to lose his grip. The people on the boat tried throwing a rope, but the wind prevented it. They tried turning the boat around but the man had gone under before they got to him. *(Life jacket worn – no)*

6. 6/11- St. Louis Co. – Lake Vermilion – A 59-year-old New Prague man drowned while he was boating alone on the lake. He was found slumped over the side of his motorboat with his face partially in the water. The motor was running in neutral and the boat was near shore. The incident was unwitnessed and it is unknown what caused the man to fall over, but the wind was strong and the waves were rough. *(Life jacket worn – no)*

7. 6/13 – Murray Co. – North Lake Shetek – A 22-year-old Adrian man died when two boats collided at about 8:09 p.m. The man, who was a passenger, was struck by another boat and was thrown into the water. A search was started for him and his body was recovered just after 11:30 a.m. the following day. *(Life jacket worn – no)*

8. 7/2 – Pope Co. – Lake Minnewaska – A 75-year-old Glenwood man drowned after falling off his pontoon boat into the water. He had been approaching his dock and had partially deployed the sea legs on his boat. It appeared he had lost his balance and struck his head before going into the water. *(Life jacket worn – no)*

9. 7/3 – Douglas Co. – Lake Carlos – A 30-year-old Alexandria man drowned after somehow going into the water from the pontoon boat he was a passenger on, at about 11:00 p.m. The boat was underway and witnesses were unsure if he jumped in or fell in. He splashed around in the water but witnesses thought he was kidding around since they thought he was a strong swimmer. The splashing slowed down, then stopped and the operator turned the boat around, but they could not find him. His body was recovered about 10:00 a.m. on 7/5. *(Life jacket worn – no)*

10. 7/31 – Itasca Co. – Bowstring Lake – A 75-year-old Henderson man drowned after somehow falling overboard from his motorboat. He was witnessed approaching his dock and trimming the motor up due to shallow water. He was later found floating partially under the dock. His fall into the water was unwitnessed. *(Life jacket worn – no)*

11. 8/8 – Becker Co. – Little Detroit Lake – A 24-year-old Moorhead man drowned after leaving his boat to go swimming at about 4:00 p.m. He was in an inflatable canoe with his brother. He wanted to go swimming so took his life jacket off and went in the water. He said he was getting tired and tried to get back in the canoe. The canoe tipped, he went under water and didn't resurface. His body was recovered in the afternoon on 8/10. *(Life jacket worn – no)*

12. 8/18 – Wright Co. – Granite Lake – An 83-year-old Elk River man drowned after falling overboard from a pontoon boat. He was sitting on a chair on the front of the boat, outside the railing. The operator thought the man had reached down for something and fell over the front of the boat. He did not respond when a life jacket was thrown to him. He was in the water for about 15 minutes. CPR was started, but was unsuccessful. *(Life jacket worn – no)*

13. 8/22 – Otter Tail Co. – Ottertail Lake – A 52-year-old Elysian man died after being hit by another watercraft while tying up his boat at his dock, at about 3:23 p.m. The other watercraft was traveling at a high rate of speed toward shore, turned sharply clockwise and went over the top of the docking boat, hitting the man. He and his passenger were thrown in the water. The other boat continued to circle

clockwise until the operator could regain control. He proceeded to his dock. The man was recovered in 4 feet of water at about 3:30 p.m. His passenger was uninjured. *(Life jacket worn – no)*

14. 9/19 – Ramsey Co. – Long Lake – A 48-year-old Shoreview woman drowned after falling overboard from her kayak just before 3:00 p.m. She was about 50 feet behind her husband, who was paddleboarding. His hat blew off and she said she would get it. He heard a thud and turned around and saw the empty kayak. A search of the water was started and her body was recovered at about 3:30 p.m. on 9/22. *(Life jacket worn – no)*

15. 9/23 – Winona Co. – Lake Winona – A 62-year-old Winona man drowned after falling overboard from his inflatable paddleboard about 12:15 p.m. Witnesses said they heard him splash and yell and then he disappeared. His body was located about 3 hours later. *(Life jacket worn – no)*

16. 11/28 – Le Sueur Co. – Clear Lake – A 55-year-old Belle Plaine man drowned when the jon boat he was a passenger in capsized. He and the boat operator had been duck hunting and were heading back to the boat access. The boat began taking on water and capsized, throwing both men into the water. The operator was able to climb on top of the overturned boat but the passenger was struggling in the water, trying to get to the boat. He was drifting further away and was removing his life jacket to get his chest waders off and continued to struggle. His head and upper body went under water and the air in his waders floated his legs and feet. First responders arrived and started lifesaving efforts. He was pronounced deceased at the hospital. *(Life jacket worn – yes, but took off in the water)*

Non-Fatal Boating Accidents

Type of Accident	Number
Capsizing	7
Collision with a fixed or floating object	4
Collision with another watercraft	26
Collision with an underwater object	2
Collision with swimmer or person in water	0
Fall in boat	7
Falls overboard	6
Fire/Explosion	10
Grounding, Hitting Bottom	1
Struck by Propeller	5
Sinking / Flooding / Swamping	8
Water-skiing, wake boarding or tubing mishap	11
Carbon Monoxide exposure	1
Other	2
Total reportable non-fatal boating accidents as of 12/31/2020	90

Notes:
1. 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.
2. There is usually a delay in the reporting of non-fatal boating accidents.

Non-Boating Drownings

1. 1/22 – Ramsey Co. – residential bathtub – A 60-year-old St. Paul man drowned while in his bathtub. A security person was doing a patrol of the building and found water coming from under the apartment door. Police officers entered with building maintenance and found the man partially submerged in the bathtub with the water running.

2. 1/25 – Ramsey Co. – hotel pool – A 4-year-old Brooklyn Center girl drowned while playing in a hotel pool. She was with family members to celebrate a birthday. The kids were playing in the pool when the girl started to struggle in the water. She was near the water slide when she went under. She was pulled from the water by a cousin and taken to the hotel room, where CPR was started. She was taken to the hospital with a pulse, but she later died.

3. 2/22 – Grant Co. – Olson Lake – A 22-year-old Hoffman man drowned after the snowmobile he was operating went into open water near an aeration system. He and some friends were staying in fish houses on the lake when he left on his snowmobile around 1:20 a.m. A friend was concerned and when he lost sight of the headlight, they followed the tracks that lead toward the open water and went next to and between warning signs. They found the man with the snowmobile in open water. He was pulled out by the friends, who started CPR. He was transported by ambulance to a hospital and was later airlifted to another hospital where he was pronounced dead.

4. 3/18 – Ramsey Co. – Mississippi River – A 50-year-old St. Paul man drowned after somehow entering the river. He was found floating along the shoreline on 3/20.

5. 4/8 – Dakota Co. – pond near Wentworth Ave. – A 24-year-old Marriottsville, MD man was found face down in the water by a person walking along the pond. His body was half in the water and half on shore. It is unknown when he came to be in the water.

6. 4/11 – Pine Co. – hotel bathtub – A 52-year-old Eau Claire, WI woman drowned while in the bathtub at a hotel. She was found unresponsive, and lifesaving measures were started. She was airlifted to the hospital, where she later died.

7. 4/26 – Scott Co. – hotel bathtub – A 25-year-old Minneapolis man drowned while taking a bath. He was found in the bathtub with the drain closed and the water running. His face was in the water. It is unknown how long he had been in the tub.

8. 4/28 – Ramsey Co. – Mississippi River – A 46-year-old Fridley man was found floating in the river near Pike Island in St. Paul. He was located on the upstream side of a log jam. It is unknown how, when and where he entered the river.

9. 5/3 – Dakota Co. – Mississippi River – A 31-year-old Inver Grove Heights man was found floating in the river, caught in some driftwood. He had been missing since October 31, 2019. It is unknown where or when he actually entered the water.

10. 5/15 – Le Sueur Co. – Lake Tetonka – A 56-year-old Burnsville man drowned while installing the dock at his cabin. He was standing in the water and his wife went on shore to get a dock section. When she returned to the water, she found him floating face-up. She pulled him to shore and EMS arrived. CPR and other life-saving efforts were attempted. He was ultimately pronounced dead.

11. 5/29 – Hennepin Co. – Victoria Lake – A 25-year-old Minneapolis man was found floating in the lake by a canoeist. He was last seen by family on 5/25 and had been reported missing. It is unknown when or how he came to be in the water.

12. 6/8 – Isanti Co. – Lory Lake – A 21-year-old Foreston man drowned after somehow entering the water from the innertube he was floating on. He had launched from the boat landing and floated about 350 yards from the landing. About 15-20 minutes after he was last observed, his empty tube was seen floating in the water. He was located in the water and taken to shore where life-saving efforts were attempted. He was taken by air to the hospital where he was pronounced dead. It is thought he was in the water for about 30 minutes.

13. 6/8 – Goodhue Co. – Lake Byllesby – A 17-year-old Farmington boy drowned while cliff jumping with friends. He had jumped into the lake and resurfaced. His friend had jumped immediately after him and landed on him in the water. He didn't resurface. Authorities were called and a search was started. His body was located almost 3 hours later.

14. 6/11 – St. Louis Co. – Long Year Lake – A 60-year-old Chisholm man drowned after somehow falling in the lake. His body was found floating near the dock on 6/11, by a boater who had just launched his boat. The last known communication with him was early in the morning on 6/10 when he reported a power outage at his apartment building. He may have been outside to investigate the power outage. It is unknown when he actually went in the water.

15. 6/14 – Scott Co. – Prior Lake – A 42-year-old Shakopee man was reported overdue from fishing at 7:30 a.m. on 6/15. He had been on the lake until about 11:00 p.m. the night before. When authorities arrived at the marina, the man's boat was on a lift in the slip, his belongings were on the dock and his hat and sandals were in the water. A search of the water was started. His body was found in the lake, under a boat in the next slip over from his, at about 12:30 p.m.

16. 6/14 – Carver Co. – Lake Minnewashta – a 60-year-old Chanhassen man drowned after apparently falling off his dock. He told his girlfriend, just after 11:00 a.m., that he was going to get the boat ready to take out later that day. A neighbor saw him at about 11:45 a.m. He was found floating in the water by the dock at about 2:00 p.m. He was pulled from the water and CPR was started. Law enforcement and first responders arrived and took over. He was transported to the hospital.

17. 6/16 – Hennepin Co. – Lake Nokomis – A 39-year-old Minneapolis man was found under water by two people who stepped on him while they were swimming. He was found about 50 feet from the shore of the west beach. He was brought to shore and CPR was started. It is unknown how long he had been under the water. He died at the hospital on 6/18.

18. 6/16 – Hennepin Co. – Bde Maka Ska – A 19-year-old Santa Clara, CA man drowned while swimming at the beach. He went after a kid's raft that was blowing away and he started to struggle in the water. His friend went to help him. They both struggled and bystanders went out to save them. The friend was brought back to shore fairly quickly. The man went under the water and was not recovered for several minutes. Both were transported to the hospital by ambulance. The friend was determined to be ok, but the man died at the hospital on 6/17.

19. 6/17 – Hennepin Co. – Minnehaha Creek – A 26-year-old Columbus, OH woman drowned while playing in the creek. She fell in the water and was pinned against a rock with her head underwater. She was pulled from the water and CPR was started. She had been underwater about 5 minutes. She was transported by EMS to a medical center, where she died on 6/23.

20. 6/17 – Cass Co. – Mississippi River – A 41-year-old Deer River man drowned after somehow entering the river. He was with friends at Schoolcraft State Park when some kind of fight occurred between the friends. He walked away from the area and was reported missing at about 11:36 p.m. A search was started. His body was recovered at about 2:45 p.m. on 6/18 about 300 yards from the park.

21. 6/24 – Ramsey Co. – Mississippi River – A 39-year-old Minneapolis man drowned while swimming across the river at about 7:00 p.m. He was hot and decided to swim across the river from the Hidden Falls Park shoreline to the Minnehaha Falls side. He started to struggle and went under water. He popped back up, yelled for help and then went back under. He didn't resurface. A search was started that evening and continued for the next two days. The victim's body surfaced on 6/26 at about 6:20 p.m.

22. 6/27 – Olmsted Co. – Cascade Lake – A 6-year-old Milwaukee, WI boy drowned while swimming/playing at the beach. He had jumped off the flotation device he was in and went under water. He was found by a bystander and was taken to the hospital where he died.

23. 6/30 – Ramsey Co. – Legacy Park pond – A 46-year-old St. Paul man drowned while visiting a homeless camp. He was seen alone, talking to himself. He then became hostile and ran to the pond and began swimming across it. After about 5 minutes, others heard him yell for help while he made splashing sounds. They then heard a gulp. After a couple minutes of silence, 911 was called. His body was recovered on 7/2.

24. 7/1 – Blue Earth Co. – residential pool – A 21-month-old Mapleton boy drowned in a residential pool. He had been outside with his brothers in the yard, when one boy ran in the house and said the baby was in the pool. The mother ran out, got the boy from the pool and called 911. CPR was started and he was transported to the hospital with a heartbeat. He later died at the hospital.

25. 7/2 – Winona Co. – Mississippi River – A 19-year-old man drowned after jumping from a train bridge into the river. After jumping in the water at about 4:00 p.m., he began to swim to shore. He began to struggle about 15 yards from shore. He called for help numerous times, and then went under and never resurfaced. His body was recovered in 13 feet of water at 4:37 p.m.

26. 7/3 – Washington Co. – St. Croix River – An 11-year-old Columbia, MO boy drowned while playing on a sandbar, in a back channel of the river, with family and friends at William O'Brien State Park. He waded out in the river with his sister on his back and a friend next to them and suddenly went under the water. The sister tried to grab him by the shirt but was unable to. The friend screamed and her mother rushed out to get them. She got the girls to shore and realized the boy was not there. 911 was called and a bystander started to dive in to find him. He was found about 1 1/2 hours later in 17 feet of water by rescue divers. He was transported to the hospital where he was later pronounced deceased.

27. 7/4 – Hennepin Co. – residential pool – A 27-year-old Brooklyn Center woman drowned while swimming in an above ground pool with her boyfriend. While swimming in the pool, the boyfriend decided to go change the music they were listening to. It is unknown how long he was gone, but when he returned he found the woman unresponsive in the pool. CPR was started and she was transported to the hospital where she was pronounced deceased.

28. 7/4 – Stearns Co. – Middle Spunk Lake – A 20-year-old Chicago, IL man drowned while swimming to a buoy that marked the edge of the swim area. No one saw him go under. He was reported missing when he was not found in the water and divers located him about 40 minutes later. He was transported to the hospital where he died the following night.

29. 7/5 – Kandiyohi Co. – Eagle Lake – A 58-year-old Willmar man drowned after somehow entering the water. He was at the public access with a friend, and they were taking turns riding the friend's personal watercraft. The man was sitting on the dock while the friend went out on the water for a ride. When the friend came back, he found the man lying on the boat ramp receiving CPR after being pulled out of the water. It is not known how the man came to be in the water.

30. 7/8 – Benton Co. – residential bathtub – An 18-year-old Rice woman drowned while in her bathtub. It is thought she may have experienced a medical situation while bathing and was not discovered until the following day.

31. 7/10 – Washington Co. – St. Croix River – A 72-year old Bayport man drowned after falling into the water at the marina. He had been walking on the dock when it is believed he slipped, struck his head and fell into the water. He was in the water for about 45 minutes before his body was recovered.

32. 7/14 – Fillmore Co. – Root River – A 58-year-old Rushford man went to fish on the river with a pool inflatable at about 1:30 p.m. He was reported missing at about midnight when he didn't return home. A search was started and the inflatable was found tied to the shore. His body was found on 7/15 at about 1:25 p.m., about a quarter mile from where the inflatable was tied.

33. 7/16 – Hennepin Co. – Lake Minnetonka – A 29-year-old St. Paul man drowned after jumping off an anchored boat to help another passenger. She had gotten in the water with a life jacket on, drifted away from the boat and started to panic. Another passenger jumped in to help and was pulled under by the first passenger but was able to break free. The man jumped in to help the first passenger and he started to struggle in the water. He was bobbing up and down and then went under. A search was started and his body was recovered on 7/20.

34. 7/16 – Todd Co. – Lake Charlotte – A 21-year-old Long Prairie man drowned while swimming with friends. The friends noticed he was in distress and attempted to help him, but he was panicking and

pulled them under as well. He submerged and 911 was called. He was located about 2 hours later, in 20 feet of water, by the dive team. The friends said he could swim, but not well.

35. 7/20 – Wright Co. – backyard fish pond – An 83-year-old Monticello man was found face down in a man-made fish pond in his backyard. It is believed he was cleaning the pond at the time he entered the water, but the incident was unwitnessed. He was found about 40 minutes after he was last seen.

36. 7/21 – Ramsey Co. – Mississippi River – An 11-year-old St. Paul boy drowned while swimming at a park beach at about 7:25 p.m. He was about 100 feet from the shore playing with another child when he went into the current and went under the water. The mother of the other child attempted to grab him but was unsuccessful. A search was started and his body was located on 7/23 at 4:08 p.m.

37. 7/24 – Otter Tail Co. – Eagle Lake – A 3-year-old Osakis girl drowned while with a group at the beach. She was found underwater by another swimmer, who pulled her from the water and brought her to shore, where two women started CPR. A pulse was regained in the ambulance on the way to the hospital. She was flown to a hospital in the Twin Cities where she later died. It is believed she had been underwater for about 15 minutes.

38. 8/1 – Sherburne Co. – Big Lake – A 24-year-old St. Cloud man drowned after falling off the tube he had been floating on. He was not a swimmer. He was seen trying to tread water, and then he went under the water. He didn't resurface. His body was recovered by the dive team almost 2 hours later, in 10 feet of water.

39. 8/17 – Clearwater Co. – Clearwater River – An 18-year-old Bagley woman drowned while swimming at the Clearwater Lake Road bridge. She was with 8 other kids and they were near a low head dam. The water was high and the current was strong. The woman and three other swimmers became trapped in the dam backwash. One swimmer was washed free and one was pushed free by the woman. The woman and the third youth were trapped and were pulled from the water by bystanders, after they were washed free of the backwash. The third youth was resuscitated, but the woman was pronounced dead on scene.

40. 8/22 – Hennepin Co. – residential pool – A 2-year-old Anoka boy drowned in a pool while at a party. He had been wearing a life jacket most of the day. There were friends and family members at the party and playing in the pool area. A family member came to say goodbye to the boy and asked where he was. Everyone began looking for him and he was found at the bottom of the pool, not wearing the life jacket. CPR was started and he was taken to the hospital, where he later died.

41. 8/29 – Hennepin Co. – Mississippi River – A 6-year-old Minneapolis boy was on a bike ride with other kids and two adults. They stopped near the river to take a break and let the kids put their feet in the water. After about 10 minutes, the kids started to move out too far. The boy started to struggle and one of the adults went to help, but he was pulling her under. The boy went under and the current was strong. His body was recovered on 8/31.

42. 9/6 – Sherburne Co. – residential pool – An almost-3-year-old Brooklyn Center boy drowned in an above ground pool after gaining access to the A-frame pool ladder. Adults had not seen him for about two minutes and started to look for him. The homeowner found him on the bottom of the pool and pulled him out. Resuscitation was started. EMS arrived and continued rescue efforts. He was transported to the hospital, where he was pronounced deceased.

43. 9/17 – Rice Co. – Cannon Lake – An 84-year-old Faribault man drowned while apparently cleaning his shoreline. Authorities were called when his daughter could not find him at his house. She had noticed a pair of boots floating about 25 feet off the end of the dock. Authorities took a boat out to the boots, which were a pair of waders still being worn by the man. A neighbor had last seen the man raking his shoreline the previous evening.

44. 9/27 – Itasca Co. – Pokegama Lake – A 29-year-old Hibbing man drowned after apparently walking into the lake about 2:00 a.m. He was reported missing later in the morning when he didn't show up at a

friend's house as planned. A search of the area was started and his body was found on the water's edge at about 4:35 p.m. on 9/29.

45. 11/3 – Mower Co. – Cedar River – A 72-year-old Rochester man drowned after somehow entering the river. He had been reported missing and was last seen on 10/23. His body was found floating in the river near Austin, on 11/3, by volunteer searchers. It is unknown where or when he entered the river.

46. 11/7 – Dakota Co. – residential bathtub – A 44-year-old Farmington woman was found dead in her bathtub on 11/7. It is unknown when the incident actually occurred. The last known contact with her was on 11/2 at 5:00 p.m. The death was determined to be an accidental drowning.

47. 11/14 – Becker Co. – Pelican River – A 57-year-old Detroit Lakes man was found floating in the river by a person out for a walk at about 2:20 p.m. It is unknown when or how he entered the water but it is thought he had not been in the water for very long.

48. 12/3 – Scott Co. – Minnesota River – A 63-year-old Bloomington man was found on the bank of the river near a park in Shakopee. He had been reported missing and had last been seen on 11/28/2020. It is unknown how, where or when he came to be in the river. It was determined that he had drowned.

49. 12/26 – Hubbard Co. – Kabekona Lake – A 60-year-old Brooklyn Park woman drowned when the side-by-side ATV she was a passenger in broke through the ice. She and the other two occupants had finished fishing and were heading back to the cabin. They went around what they thought was a pressure ridge and the front of the ATV went through the ice. All three surfaced and were pulled from the water by her son who was on a nearby snowmobile. The woman was unresponsive and CPR was started. She was transported to the hospital where she died.