

Preliminary 2022 Minnesota Boating Accident and Drowning Summary

Prepared by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Boat and Water Safety
as of 8/15/2022

Summary of Accidents – as of 8/15 each year

Accident Category and Year	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Boating Fatalities	7	15	11	9	10	10	11	9	8	8
Non-Fatal Boating Accidents	44	57	71	69	52	80	67	57	25	46
Non-Boating Drownings	5	43	38	26	26	22	30	27	18	23

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	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Boating Fatalities	18	16	10	14	12	18	18	14	12	15
Non-Fatal Boating Accidents	69	89	90	64	92	79	71	36	65	72
Non-Boating Drownings	53	49	35	40	31	40	35	29	30	40

2022 Statewide Summary – as of 8/15/2022

Boating Fatalities

- 4/29 – Washington Co. – Big Marine Lake – A 55-year-old Hugo man was operating his 19-foot motorboat when he and his passenger (see #2) were thrown overboard just before 2:00 p.m. They had left the boat launch at a high speed. The boat took a hard left turn, putting both men in the water without life jackets, which were still in the boat. Another boater tried to rescue the men, but they had gone under and did not resurface. The operator's body was recovered from 24 feet of water at 7:00 p.m. *(Life jacket: worn – no, on board – yes)*
- 4/29 – Washington Co. – Big Marine Lake – A 45-year-old Centerville man was the passenger on a 19-foot motorboat when he and the operator (see #1) were thrown overboard just before 2:00 p.m. They had left the boat launch at a high speed. The boat took a hard left turn, putting both men in the water without life jackets, which were still in the boat. Another boater tried to rescue the men, but they had gone under and did not resurface. The man's body was recovered from about 25 feet of water at 2:00 p.m. the following day. *(Life jacket: worn – no, on board – yes)*
- 6/8 – Becker Co. – Detroit Lake – A 20-year-old Fergus Falls man drowned after jumping overboard from a drifting 24-foot pontoon boat on which he was a passenger. The boat drifted away from him, and he started to swim toward the boat. He began to struggle and yelled for help. Other passengers jumped in to help, but he started to pull them under, so they swam back to the boat. The operator then jumped into the water but was unable to find the man. The victim was fully clothed and was not wearing a life jacket at the time he went into the water. His body was recovered about 3 ½ hours later. *(Life jacket: worn – no, on board – yes)*

4. 6/17 – Lake of the Woods Co. – Lake of the Woods – A 29-year-old Rochester man drowned after falling overboard from the 21-foot motorboat he was a passenger on. The boat was moving at a slow speed while the occupants were fishing. The man was standing on a rear casting platform when the boat stuck something underwater. He fell overboard and was not moving in the water. A Type IV throwable device was thrown and landed near the man but he was still motionless and was starting to sink in the water. One of the boat occupants jumped in the water to attempt to rescue the man, but he was unsuccessful. The victim was recovered the following day by Sheriff’s Deputies. *(Life jacket: worn – no, on board – yes)*
5. 6/18 – Otter Tail Co. – South Lida Lake – A 48-year-old Pelican Rapids man died after jumping from his 21-foot pontoon boat to rescue his dog. They had just left the dock about 5 minutes earlier when the dog jumped from the boat into the water. The operator jumped in to rescue the dog and began to struggle. A Type IV throwable cushion was thrown to him but he was still struggling. The passenger jumped in the water and dragged the man to the boat using the cushion, but the man lost consciousness. CPR was started and they went back to the boat access where authorities took over. He was pronounced dead at the scene. *(Life jacket: worn – no, on board – yes)*
6. 6/19 – Crow Wing Co. – Pelican Lake – A 49-year-old Merrifield man drowned while swimming from a drifting 18-foot pontoon boat. The boat drifted away from him, and he began to struggle in the water. He was face-down in the water while the other people on the boat struggled to maneuver the boat back to him. After about 3-4 minutes, they got him on the boat and CPR was begun. They got back to the public access where lifesaving measures continued. He was, however, pronounced dead at the scene. *(Life jacket: worn – no, on board – yes)*
7. 7/1 – Le Sueur Co. – Lake Washington – A 45-year-old Madison Lake man was found floating in the lake near shore after his family had reported him missing. He had taken his 24-foot pontoon boat out the previous evening. His family went looking for him in the morning when they discovered he was not home. They found the boat, about 35 feet from the dock, floating along the shoreline. County Deputies arrived and started a search. He was found in about 2 feet of water about 30 feet from the dock. It is unknown how he came to be in the water. *(Life jacket: worn – no, on board – yes)*

Non-Fatal Boating Accidents

Type of Accident	Number
Capsizing	3
Collision with a fixed or floating object	4
Collision with another watercraft	13
Collision with an underwater object	3
Collision with swimmer or person in water	1
Falls in boat	1
Falls overboard	6
Fire/Explosion	3
Grounding, Hitting Bottom	1
Struck by Propeller	1
Sinking / Flooding / Swamping	5
Water-skiing, wake boarding or tubing mishap	2
Carbon Monoxide exposure	0
Other	1
Total reportable non-fatal boating accidents as of 8/15/2022	44

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. 4/1 – Dakota Co. – Galaxie Pond – A 66-year-old Lakeville man drowned after somehow entering the pond. His body was found about 8 feet from shore, with about a half-inch of ice surrounding him. It is unknown when he entered the water. *(Swimming ability – Unknown)*
2. 5/12 – Washington Co. – St. Croix River – A 17-year-old Stillwater teen drowned while trying to help a friend. Several friends were jumping off the dock into the water at about 5:45 p.m. One person in the group started to struggle in the water. The victim jumped off the dock, in an attempt to help his friend, however, he was unable to swim and went under the water and didn't resurface. Authorities arrived and located him about 45 minutes after he went under. Lifesaving measures were started and he was transported to the hospital, where he died early the following morning. *(Swimming ability – non-swimmer)*
3. 6/3 – Hennepin Co. – Lake Minnetonka – A 20-year-old Minneapolis man drowned while SCUBA diving in Maxwell Bay. He was diving with a team working for a weed removal company when one of his coworkers noticed he was missing. The coworker called 911. A search was started and he was recovered about an hour and a half later. CPR was started by paramedics but was unsuccessful. *(Swimming ability – Unknown)*
4. 6/11 – Douglas Co. – hotel pool – A 6-year-old Alexandria boy was found at the bottom of a hotel swimming pool. He was recovered from the bottom of the pool and CPR was started. He was taken to the hospital in critical condition. He passed away at the hospital 4 days later. It is unknown how long he had been in the pool. *(Swimming ability – Unknown)*
5. 6/25 – Hennepin Co. – residential pool – A 7-year-old Minneapolis boy drowned after slipping into a backyard pool. He was hanging on to the edge of the pool with another child when they both slipped into the water. The other child was able to swim out of the pool but could not find the boy. He was pulled out by EMS and transported to the medical center, where he was pronounced dead. *(Swimming ability – Unknown)*

There are also many water incidents pending – waiting for accident reports or confirmation of drowning to be submitted.