

Preliminary 2022 Minnesota Boating Accident and Drowning Summary

Prepared by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Boat and Water Safety
as of 1/31/2023

Summary of Accidents – as of 12/31 each year

Accident Category and Year	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Boating Fatalities	15	18	16	10	14	12	18	18	14	12
Non-Fatal Boating Accidents	77	69	89	90	64	92	79	71	36	65
Non-Boating Drownings	30	53	49	35	40	31	40	35	29	30

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 12/31/2022

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 struck 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 drowned and 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. The man 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)*
8. 8/8 – Washington Co. – St. Croix River – A 43-year-old White Bear Lake man drowned while out fishing on the river in the overnight hours. His empty 14-foot motorboat was found floating in the river at about 8:30 a.m. and was reported to the County Sheriff's Office. A search for the man began, and his body was found in the water just before noon. It is not known how he came to be in the water. *(Life jacket: worn – no, on board – yes)*
9. 8/13 – Aitkin Co. – Elm Island Lake – A 25-year-old Hopkins man drowned after falling overboard about 4:00 p.m. while fishing with friends. He had been sitting on the side of the 18-foot motorboat while it was traveling at a low speed with an electric motor. He went underwater and didn't resurface. Others from the boat attempted to locate him in the water but the water was too murky. Authorities recovered his body at about 10:00 p.m. *(Life jacket: worn – no, on board – yes)*
10. 8/22 – Lake of the Woods Co. – Lake of the Woods – A 62-year-old Greenbush man drowned after jumping in the water from his drifting 25-foot pontoon boat to swim with his grandkids. The boat occupants had been fishing. The children and another passenger decided to go swimming. The man, who was the boat operator, decided to join them. He dove in the water and didn't resurface. 911 was called. His body was found in 27 feet of water about 7 ½ hours later. *(Life jacket: worn – no, on board – yes)*
11. 9/4 – Jackson Co. – Pearl Lake – A 23-year-old Fayetteville, NC man was on a paddleboat with two other people. The boat began sinking after taking on a large amount of water. The boat occupants were holding the boat and swimming it back to shore when it completely submerged. The victim was not a good swimmer and went under. His body was recovered about 3 hours later. *(Life jacket: worn – no, on board – no)*

12. 9/4 – Cass Co. – Ten Mile Lake – A 13-year-old Motley girl died when the 21-foot motorboat on which she was a passenger struck something underwater. They had been fishing and the wind pushed the boat toward shore. They got underway and the boat struck something and came to an abrupt stop. She had been seated behind the operator and was thrown forward into him, causing injury. *(Life jacket: worn – no, on board – yes)*
13. 9/10 – St. Louis Co. – Vermilion River – A 43-year-old Orr man drowned when the 17-foot canoe he was a passenger in capsized. The passenger and the canoe owner had been harvesting wild rice when they got into an argument. The canoe tipped and they both went into the water. Another canoe was coming by and helped the owner out of the water and to shore, but the passenger was mad and wanted to stay with the canoe, which was upright, but filled with water. The canoe was later seen floating down the river, empty. The passenger’s body was located the following day by the County Rescue Squad. *(Life jacket: worn – no, on board – no)*
14. 9/12 – Hennepin Co. – North Twin Lake – A 69-year-old Brooklyn Center man died while barefoot water-skiing. The 20-foot open motorboat was going about 40 MPH when the skier fell. He started to swim to the boat and then became unconscious in the water. The operator got him in the boat and brought him to shore. First responders started lifesaving measures and he was transported to the hospital, where he later died. *(Life jacket: worn – no, on board – yes)*
15. 9/29 – Dakota Co. – Mississippi River – A 59-year-old Hastings man died when the 16-foot motorized jon boat he was operating struck a 34-foot cabin motorboat. Both the operator and passenger were thrown from the boat. Neither were wearing a life jacket. The occupants of the cabin cruiser got them from the water and onto their boat and called 911. The man and his passenger were transported to the hospital, where the man died. *(Life jackets: worn – no, on board – yes)*

Non-Fatal Boating Accidents

Type of Accident	Number
Capsizing	4
Collision with a fixed or floating object	8
Collision with another watercraft	27
Collision with an underwater object	3
Collision with swimmer or person in water	1
Falls in boat	3
Falls overboard	10
Fire/Explosion	4
Grounding, Hitting Bottom	3
Struck by Propeller	1
Sinking / Flooding / Swamping	5
Water-skiing, wake boarding or tubing mishap	7
Carbon Monoxide exposure	0
Other	1
Total reportable non-fatal boating accidents as of 12/31/2022	77

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, attempting 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. 5/14 – Anoka Co. – Mississippi River – The body of a 57-year-old Elk River man was found caught in some trees which were floating down the river. He had been reported missing on 4/4/2022. It is unknown when or how he had entered the water. *(Swimming ability – Unknown)*
4. 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, he was recovered about an hour and a half later. CPR was started by paramedics but was unsuccessful. *(Swimming ability – Unknown)*
5. 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)*
6. 6/12 – Dakota Co. – Lake Marion – A 22-year-old Lakeville woman drowned while swimming. She was with a friend swimming at a park beach at about 6:00 a.m. She went underwater and did not surface. Her friend found her under the water and brought her to the beach where 911 was called and CPR was started. She was transported by ambulance but was pronounced deceased. She had been under water for 2-3 minutes. *(Swimming ability – Unknown)*
7. 6/19 – Renville Co. – Minnesota River – The body of a 48-year-old Willmar man was found entangled in a log jam on the river just before 3:00 p.m. It is thought that he had been fleeing from law enforcement before he entered the river. There was a strong current during this time. The log jam was near where he had last been seen. *(Swimming ability – Unknown)*
8. 6/19 – Renville Co. – Minnesota River – A 19-year-old Franklin man drowned while at a park with his family. He swam across the river and began climbing a rock formation. He went back into the water and began struggling. The water was high, and the current was strong. There were several eddies in the area. He called for help, went under the water and didn't resurface. He was recovered about 2 hours later. Lifesaving measures were attempted but were not successful. *(Swimming ability – Swimmer)*
9. 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)*
10. 6/25 – Scott Co. – Minnesota River – The body of a 54-year-old Shakopee man was found floating in the river by two fishermen. It is unknown how, when or where the man entered the river. He had been reported missing earlier in the week. *(Swimming ability – Unknown)*
11. 7/5 – Hennepin Co. – Crystal Lake – A 25-year-old Brooklyn Center man drowned after somehow entering the lake. Authorities received a report of something floating in the lake near a walking path and

when they arrived discovered it was the man's body. It is unknown how, when or where the man entered the water. He was last known to have been seen two days before. (*Swimming ability – Unknown*)

12. 7/5 – Ramsey Co. – Mississippi River – The body of a 49-year-old Brooklyn Center man was found floating at the Ford Dam electric wash plant. It is unknown how, when or where he came to be in the river. (*Swimming ability – Unknown*)
13. 7/6 – Clay Co. – Red River – A 35-year-old man drowned after somehow entering the river in Moorhead. His body was found face-down in the water along the bank of the river. It is unknown when he went in the river, but in June, he had made mention of wanting to swim across the river. (*Swimming ability – Unknown*)
14. 7/6 – Ramsey Co. – residential bathtub – A 56-year-old St. Paul woman drowned while taking a bath. She was found by a caretaker. She had last been seen alive on 7/4. (*Swimming ability – Unknown*)
15. 7/11 – Nobles Co. – Lake Okabena – A 19-year-old Worthington man drowned while with family at the lake. They had a picnic and then went for a walk along the lake. The man went wading in the lake. He stepped off an underwater ledge and was in water over his head. He did not know how to swim and could not get back to shore. His body was recovered about 1 ½ hours later. (*Swimming ability – Non-Swimmer*)
16. 7/21 – Blue Earth Co. – Minnesota River – An 8-year-old Janesville girl drowned while at the river with family. The parents and four children were playing on a sandbar and swimming in the river when two of the children were pulled into deeper water by the current and began struggling. One child was rescued by a witness, but the girl had gone under before anyone could reach her. Authorities responded quickly and began a search. Her body was located up against a sandbar the following morning, more than a mile downstream. (*Swimming ability – Swimmer*)
17. 7/26 – Ramsey Co. – Mississippi River – The body of a 56-year-old man was found floating in the river in St. Paul. It unknown where, when or how he came to be in the river. (*Swimming ability – Unknown*)
18. 8/9 – Dakota Co. – drainage pond – A 3-year-old Inver Grove Heights boy drowned in a shallow drainage pond behind a residence near his home. He had left the house unnoticed. He was found face-down about 6 feet from shore by his caretaker. CPR was given to no avail. There was a short construction fence around the pond. (*Swimming ability – Unknown*)
19. 9/1 – Pine Co. – Sand Lake – A 62-year-old Ramsey man drowned after falling from a dock into the water. He was pushing his friend's pontoon boat away from the dock, lost his balance and fell. He was removed from the water but was not breathing. Lifesaving measures were begun, and he was transported to the hospital, where he died. (*Swimming ability – Unknown*)
20. 9/4 – Scott Co. – Lake O'Dowd – A 26-year-old Shakopee man drowned after somehow entering the water. His body was found floating near a fishing pier. It is unknown how, where or when he entered the water. (*Swimming ability – Unknown*)
21. 9/5 – Ramsey Co. – Long Lake – A 77-year-old New Brighton man drowned after somehow entering the water. He was found floating about 30 yards from the shoreline by his son. It is believed he had been fishing, but it is unknown how he came to be in the water. Lifesaving measures were performed on site but were unsuccessful. (*Swimming ability – Swimmer*)
22. 9/5 – Crow Wing Co. – Rice Lake – A 30-year-old Hutchinson man drowned while swimming at a summer camp beach with his students. He was near a floating dock and had gone underwater. He was down for about 5 minutes and didn't resurface. He was retrieved by a lifeguard and CPR was given. He was transported to the hospital where he was pronounced deceased. (*Swimming ability – Swimmer*)
23. 9/10 – Blue Earth Co. – Glenwood Pond – A 20-year-old Mankato man drowned after somehow entering the pond. He was last seen at about midnight. His family reported him missing later that afternoon. A

search of the area on foot and by drone was unsuccessful. His body was located in the pond near a culvert on 9/12. *(Swimming ability – Unknown)*

24. 9/25 – Dakota Co. – bathtub – An 8-month-old girl drowned while in the bathtub. Her father put her in the tub and turned on the water, but left the drain plug out. He went to check on dinner and when he came back the girl was face down in the water. Officers performed life saving measures and the child was transported to the hospital. *(Swimming ability – Non-Swimmer)*
25. 10/4 – Sibley Co. – Minnesota River – A 58-year-old LeSueur man drowned after somehow entering the water. Authorities had received a request for a welfare check of the victim on 10/3. The MN State Patrol reported a vehicle parked on a frontage road that leads to the river. It had been there a couple of days. A search of the area was started. On 10/4, The man's body was found in the river hung up on some debris. There was a canoe beached on the shoreline. It is unknown what the man's activities were and how or when he entered the water. *(Swimming ability – Unknown)*
26. 10/6 – Hennepin Co. – private hot tub – An 82-year-old Bloomington man drowned while using his hot tub. His son arrived to pick him up for dinner and found him in the water. It is unknown how long he had been in the hot tub, but his son had received a voicemail from him on 10/3. *(Swimming ability – Swimmer)*
27. 10/11 – Ramsey Co. – apartment bathtub – A 67-year-old St. Paul man drowned while in the bathtub in his apartment. He was found by staff at the apartment building after his daughter contacted them to do a welfare check on him because she had not heard from him and had last talked to him on 10/7. *(Swimming ability – Unknown)*
28. 10/28 – Rice Co. – swimming pool – A 70-year-old Northfield man drowned while swimming in the swimming pool at a senior center. He was found floating face-down. He was removed from the pool and CPR was performed but was unsuccessful. *(Swimming ability – Swimmer)*
29. 11/6 – Stearns Co. – Sauk River – A 69-year-old Cold Spring man drowned while attempting to recover his boat lift cover which had blown into the river. He went in the river to swim after it. He was about 30 to 40 feet from shore when his wife saw him go under the water. She called 911, and a rescue boat was taken out to recover him. He was brought to shore and lifesaving measures were started. They were continued for about 45 minutes but were unsuccessful. He had been under water for about 15 minutes. *(Swimming ability – Unknown)*
30. 11/11 – Aitkin Co. – Rat Lake – A 38-year-old Vergas man drowned after somehow entering the lake. He had been reported as a missing person. After several days of searching, his body was located on 11/11 in the lake. It is unknown how, why, when or where the man had entered the water. *(Swimming ability – Unknown)*