

Preliminary 2024 Minnesota Boating Incident and Drowning Summary

Prepared by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Boat and Water Safety
as of 6/13/2024

Summary of Incidents – as of 6/13 each year

Incident Category and Year	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Boating Fatalities	5	3	3	9	7	4	7	8	6	4
Non-Fatal Boating Incidents	4	11	16	23	23	14	9	22	19	16
Non-Boating Drownings	9	14	6	26	14	12	10	13	14	14

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

Summary of Incidents for the Entire Year – January - December

Incident Category and Year	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Boating Fatalities	9	15	18	16	10	14	12	18	18	14
Non-Fatal Boating Incidents	59	76	69	89	90	64	92	79	71	36
Non-Boating Drownings	48	30	53	49	35	40	31	40	35	29

2024 Statewide Summary – as of 6/13/2024

Boating Fatalities

- 4/15 – Cottonwood Co. – Eagle Lake – A 15-year-old Mountain Lake boy drowned after jumping into the lake, about 6:45 p.m., from the 13-foot canoe he was paddling. He was trying to retrieve the oar that had dropped into the water. The wind pushed the canoe away and he was unable to get back into it. He started to swim to shore and the passenger in the canoe lost sight of him. His body was recovered from 4 ½-feet of water at 11:25 a.m. on 4/17/2024. *(Life jacket: worn – no, on board – no)*
- 5/11 or 5/12 – Kandiyohi Co. – Nest Lake – A 39-year-old Overland Park, KS man drowned while on the lake to watch the northern lights. He had last been seen about 11:30 p.m. on 5/11, attempting to take a 9-foot, 9-inch kayak out on the water. He was reported missing on 5/12. A search was begun, and the kayak was found early in the afternoon on 5/12. The man’s body was located and recovered the morning of 5/14. *(Life jacket: worn – no, on board – no)*
- 5/18 – St. Louis Co. – Iron Lake – A 41-year-old Cambridge man was missing after the 20-foot canoe he and another man were fishing from drifted too close to Curtain Falls, from the Crooked Lake side of the falls, in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA). The canoe capsized, as it went over the falls with the other man on board, putting the victim on a rock at the top of the falls and injuring the man still in the canoe. Another canoe from the group came over to help the victim on the rocks and told him to swim to them. He was able to grab on to the other canoe as it was pushed over the waterfall by the current. His body was recovered from Iron Lake on 5/31/2024 at 10:00 a.m. The injured man from this canoe was rescued by helicopter on 5/19/2024. *(Life jacket: worn – no, on board – yes)*

4. 5/18 – St. Louis Co. – Iron Lake – A 40-year-old Lino Lakes man was missing after the 18 ½-foot canoe he and another man were in was swept over Curtain Falls in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA). They were attempting to rescue their friend who became stranded on a rock at the top of the falls when his canoe was swept over. The man they were rescuing had grabbed on to their canoe just before it was swept over the falls by the current. The body of the missing man from this canoe was recovered from Iron Lake on 6/3/2024 at 10:12 a.m. The injured man from this canoe was rescued by helicopter on 5/19/2024. *(Life jacket: worn – no, on board – yes)*
5. 5/26 – Lake Co. – White Iron Lake – A 54-year-old St. Louis, MO man drowned after somehow coming to be in the lake. He was found face-down in the water near an unoccupied 16-foot boat that was unsecured at the shoreline. The incident was unwitnessed, but it is thought the man had somehow fallen from the boat. *(Life jacket: worn – no, on board – yes, but not accessible)*

Non-Fatal Boating Incidents

Type of Incident	Number
Capsizing	0
Collision with a fixed object (including boats moored to a dock, pier, or similar structure)	1
Collision with floating object (above or below the water; other than another boat)	0
Collision with another watercraft	0
Grounding, Hitting Bottom	0
Person struck by boat (either inside or outside of boat)	0
Person impacts boat – (slips, trips, falls, or strikes surface on or in a boat)	0
Falls overboard	1
Person ejected from boat	0
Person departs boat voluntarily (resulting in injury)	0
Fire/Explosion	2
Electrical Shock – from boat or its equipment	0
Struck by Propeller/Propulsion Unit/Water Jet	0
Sinking	0
Flooding	0
Swamping	0
Towed Watersport mishap	0
Carbon Monoxide exposure	0
Natural phenomena	0
Other	0
Total reportable non-fatal boating incidents as of 6/13/2024	4

Notes:

1. Reportable non-fatal boating incidents 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 incidents.

Non-Boating Drownings

1. 1/5 – Cass Co. – Pike Bay – An 82-year-old Bemidji man drowned when the ATV he was driving, with a passenger on board, broke through the ice. He was checking the ice near a heave, at about 11:15 a.m., when the ATV broke through, putting both men in the water. Nearby witnesses pulled the man from the water and started lifesaving efforts. Deputies arrived and continued lifesaving measures. He was

transported by airboat to an ambulance, and was taken to the hospital, where he later died. The passenger was treated on scene. *(Swimming ability – unknown)*

2. 1/19 – Hennepin Co. – Lake of the Isles – A 40-year-old Wadena man drowned in the channel between Lake of the Isles and Bde Maka Ska. His body was found frozen in the ice. It is unknown how he came to be in the water, or how long he had been there. *(Swimming ability – unknown)*
3. 2/14 – Hennepin Co. – Lake Independence – A 72-year-old Brooklyn Park man drowned after breaking through the ice while out ice fishing. His wife called authorities at 10:30 p.m. when he hadn't returned home. Deputies went to the lake and used an airboat to search. The man's ATV was found stopped, but still running, on the ice near a pressure ridge. As they approached the ATV, the ice started breaking. The man's body was found in the water and was recovered at 4:30 a.m. on 2/15. It is unknown when he broke through the ice and went into the water. *(Swimming ability – unknown)*
4. 3/3 – Ramsey Co. – residential bathtub – A 75-year-old St. Paul woman drowned while taking a bath. She lived alone. Her nephew hadn't heard from her in a while and her minister called to tell him that she hadn't attended church that day. The nephew called authorities to check on her. She was found deceased in the tub with the water running. *(Swimming ability – unknown)*
5. 3/9 – Ramsey Co. – Mississippi River – A 37-year-old Minneapolis man drowned after somehow entering the river. His body was found floating near shore in St. Paul. It is unknown when or where he entered the water. *(Swimming ability – unknown)*
6. 5/3 – Waseca Co. – Clear Lake – A 65-year-old Waseca man drowned while fishing in the lake. His wife had been unable to contact him and called authorities just after 10:30 p.m. He was found floating in the water, wearing chest waders, about 6 feet from shore about an hour later. It is unknown how long he had been in the water. *(Swimming ability – unknown)*
7. 5/10 – St. Louis Co. – Lake Agnes – A 62-year-old Duluth man drowned while in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. He was found on the shore, partially submerged in the water with a backpack on one shoulder and a life jacket clutched in his hand. A canoe was found on shore about 250 yards away. It is unknown how he came to be in the water, but it is not thought that he had fallen from the canoe. *(Swimming ability – unknown)*
8. 5/12 – Brown Co. – Mound Creek Park – A 15-year-old Mountain Lake boy was jumping off a rock into the water at about 3:00 p.m. After several jumps he began swimming to the beach. While swimming, he yelled something and then went under the water and didn't resurface. He was recovered from 7-feet of water just over an hour later and lifesaving measures were performed but were eventually stopped. *(Swimming ability – unknown)*
9. 5/25 – Washington Co. – St. Croix River – A 71-year-old Marine on St. Croix man drowned after somehow coming to be in the water. A neighbor heard cries for help at about 6:00 p.m. when she went out to investigate why her dogs were barking. She saw the victim struggling in the water. She called 911 while her husband jumped in to get the man out of the water. He then performed chest compressions until authorities arrived. *(Swimming ability – unknown)*

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