



Newfoundland and Labrador Drowning Report

2003 Edition

Newfoundland Drownings In 2001

The number of drownings and preventable water-related deaths in Newfoundland and Labrador in 2001 (23) haven't changed over 2000's statistics (23). However, the 2001 total of 23 deaths is down from the 31 deaths just four years earlier in 1998 (See chart #1).

By time of year, the drownings in Newfoundland during 2001 reflected more deaths in the summer months of June, July and August (10) - compared to 1999 (5) during recreational, occupational and daily living activities. That is 43% of the total drowning deaths happened within a three month time period, while the rest of the year represented 57%.

Very different drowning trends are emerging by age in Newfoundland. There has been a slight increase in deaths among the 13-34 years of age (increase of 2), however, the 35-49 age group still remains the biggest risk but has decreased from last years 41% of total drownings to 30% (decrease of 2). Still the second highest since 1994 (see chart #2).

By type of activity, boating continues to account for 48% of all Newfoundland water-related deaths – usually on the ocean involving recreational or commercial fishing. In total, 74%

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Most Fatalities Happen During Recreational Activities

Recreational activities accounted for 74% of Newfoundland and Labrador water-related deaths during 2001 and contributed to 63% of all deaths during the past five years.

Of Preventable Water-Related Deaths by Purpose of Activity Newfoundland and Labrador

	95-99 (avg)	00	01
Recreational	17	11	17
Occupational	4	8	6
Daily Living	4	4	0
Unknown	3	0	0

2001 Drowning Statistics

In 2001, 48% (11) of water-related deaths occurred between May and August. September through December saw 2 deaths and January through April saw 10 deaths.

Seventy-eight percent (78%) of water-related deaths occurred during the weekday (i.e. Monday-Thursday), 33% occurred in the morning, 42% in the afternoon, and the remaining 25% occurred at night.

Also, 44% of all drownings occurred in cloudy or overcast weather. ■

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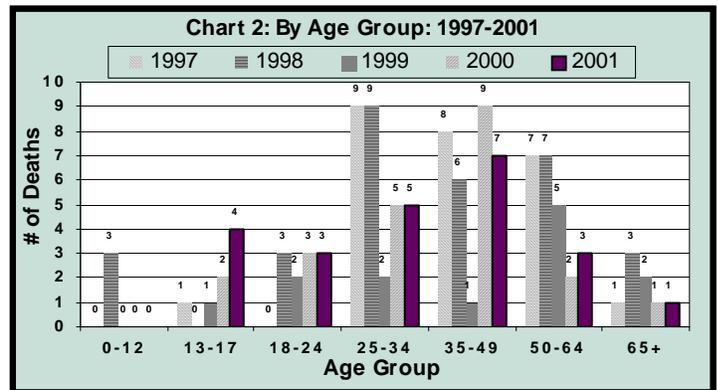
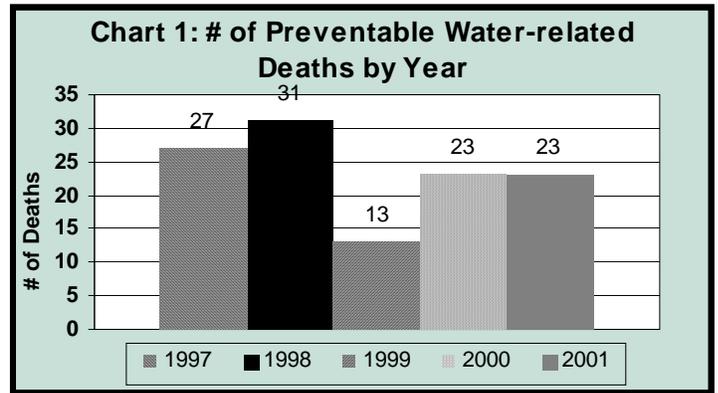
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(17) of the 2001 water-related fatalities occurred during recreational activity. Although recreational fishing and powerboating had decreased from 31% in 1999 to 18% in 2000, it has risen again in 2001 to 29% of total preventable water-related deaths. While snowmobiling fatalities have remained the same as last year (3), they are up from 1999's total of 0. (see chart #3).

Much drowning prevention work remains to be done in Newfoundland and Labrador. Risk-taking behaviour such as alcohol consumption, not wearing lifejackets/PFDs and lack of boat operator training are factors contributing to the high death rate among adult men. Initiatives such as the new federal recreational boating safety regulations, which began to take effect in September 1999, and the LIFESAVING SOCIETY'S B.O.A.T. (Boat Operator Accredited Training) Safety course will help reduce the drowning toll.

As well, the SOCIETY's Water Smart public education campaign educated Canadians about how to modify their high risk behaviour and assume greater responsibility for themselves and others when in, on or near water.

The SOCIETY's lifesaving and lifeguarding training programs teach self-rescue and how to rescue others, should an aquatic emergency occur, so that they can avoid becoming a drowning statistic. ■

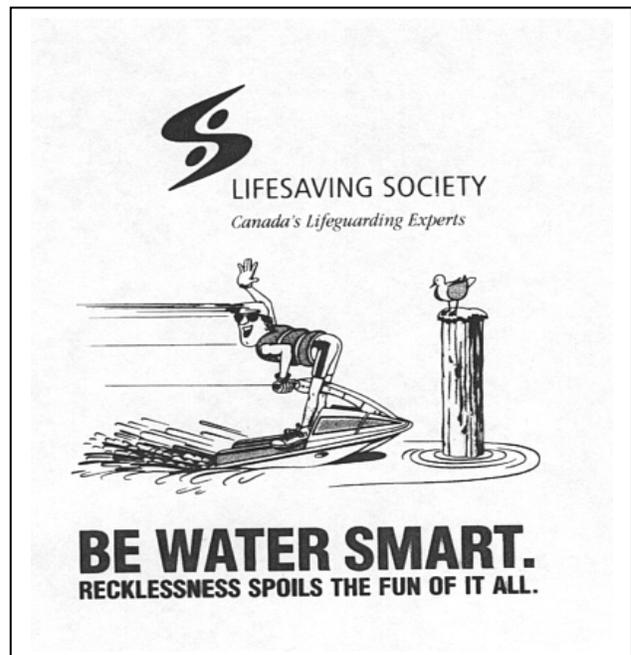


Number Of Drowning Victims Increased Compared To 1999

In 2001, the number of water-related deaths in Newfoundland has not decreased. This proves that we need to continue with education in water safety and drowning prevention.

During 2001, 7 victims of water-related deaths were under the age of 25. Since 1999's statistics, fatalities in the 19-49 year old range have tripled. In 2001, there were 15 deaths in this age group compared to 5 in 1999, down one from 2000's 16. However, the age group 5-12 years old have had 6 consecutive years with no drownings.

2001 saw 7 drowning victims between the ages of 35-49, representing 30% of total drowning victims, down 2 from last year but a huge increase compared to 1999's single victim in this age range (see chart #2). ■



Increase in Fishing, Powerboating and Snowmobiling Drownings

The increase in the year 2001 in recreational deaths cannot be attributed to one activity in particular. In 2000, there were only 2 deaths by way of recreational fishing but this has risen to 5 in 2001. The number of deaths by way of powerboating (4) has doubled from last year (2). While snowmobiling deaths have remained the same (3). (see chart #3).

Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the drowning victims did not wear a lifejacket or PFD and alcohol contributed to 26% of all water-related deaths.

The 2000 statistics showed that deaths involving boating represented almost 57% of the total deaths for that year. In 2001 that figure has dropped a little, now representing 48% of total drownings. Forty-six percent (46%) of boating fatalities involved boats over 5.5 meters (18 feet), boats 5.5 meters and under represented almost 18%, while incidents involving canoes represented 27% and Kayaks were involved in 9%.

Most Newfoundland boating fatalities occurred on the ocean (91%) or lakes and ponds (9%) (See chart #5).

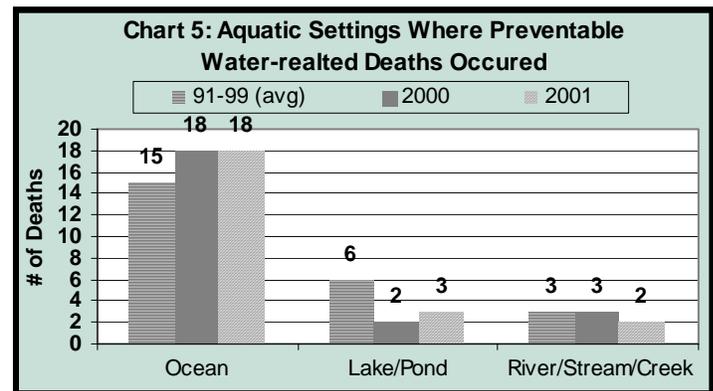
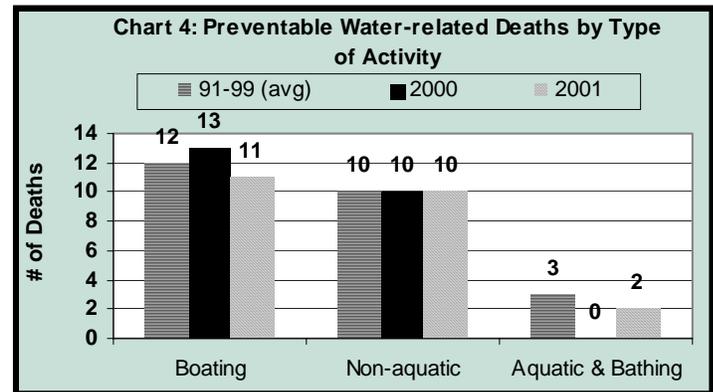
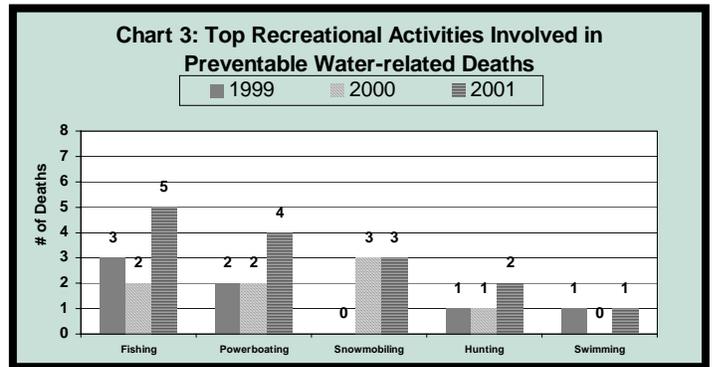
Of the 18 deaths that occurred on the ocean, 67% were recreational, and 33% were occupational.

In most fatal boating incidents, the boat capsized (36%), while swamping contributed to 27%, and falling or getting thrown overboard represented 18% of all fatalities involving boats.

The boat was more likely to have capsized in ocean incidents (86%) than lakes/ponds (14%). Also, the victim was more likely to have fallen overboard on the ocean than lakes, ponds, rivers or streams.

Of the total water-related deaths, most drownings occurred during recreational activity representing almost 74% - most often snowmobiling and boating. Occupational activity accounted for 26% of all fatalities (Commercial fishing contributed to 5 drowning victims).

Alcoholic beverage consumption was involved in 50% of all boating deaths. The victim was only wearing a lifejacket/PFD properly in 9% of all boating deaths, while 82% did not wear one even though 36% of the time there was a lifejacket/PFD present. ■





Eastern Drownings Skyrocket, While Others Decline

The Eastern district water-related death total is at an all time high of 10 for the 2001 year. It has never been this high in the ten years that statistics have been kept by the Society. This is a drastic change from last year's single drowning fatality in this area. All of these water-related fatalities were men over the age of 18. While the Eastern Avalon District remains the same as last year with 4 deaths, these two districts have accounted for almost 61% of all Newfoundland and Labrador deaths in 2001. Water-related deaths in Central Newfoundland have decreased by more than half from 2000's 9 to this year's 3. In Labrador, drownings went from 4 in 2000 to 3 in 2001, and Western has seen a decrease of 2. ■



Rowboats More Deadly Than Powerboats for Recreational Boating

In 1996, the Canadian Coast Guard estimated that 30,600 boats were owned or rented for pleasure and recreational use in Newfoundland¹. The vast majority (99%) were owned privately. One in 9 Newfoundland households (11%) own at least one boat, and boat-owning households on average have 1.5 boats per household¹.

More than half (58%) of the 30,600 boats for recreational use in Newfoundland are powerboats¹. A further 21% are canoes and kayaks, and 18% are rowboats. There are still relatively few personal watercraft in Newfoundland (800 in 1996).

Powerboats accounted for about a little over half (56%) of all Newfoundland boating deaths during 1993-1997. Rowboats were the next most involved craft (19%), followed by canoes (8%). Focusing in on recreational boating deaths only, powerboats (38%) and rowboats (31%) each accounted for about one-third of recreational boating deaths. Powerboats involved in recreational deaths were usually small open powerboats under 5.5 metres (18 feet) in length. Larger powerboats over 5.5 metres are more likely to be involved in occupational incidents (eg. commercial fishing, marine shipping). There has been only 1 personal watercraft fatality during the past five years; it occurred in 1996.

While powerboats and rowboats account for similar numbers of recreational boating fatalities, relative to the number of craft, the water-related death rate for rowboats at 46 deaths per 100,000 boats per year, is much higher than for powerboats, at 17 deaths per 100,000 boats, or other types of boats. Risk-taking behaviour is contributing to the higher death rate for rowboats. Most rowboat victims were not wearing a PFD (79%), half (50%) had consumed alcoholic beverages, and almost half (43%) were out after dark; on the ocean (64%) or a lake/pond (36%). ■

	'000's of Boats for Pleasure Use-1996 ¹	# of Recr. Boating W-R Deaths-1993-1997 Total	W-R Death Rate - # of Deaths per 100,000 Boats per Year
Powerboats	17,800	15	17
Personal Watercraft	800	1	26
Canoes & Kayaks	6,400	6	19
Rowboats	5,600	13	46
Other/type unknown	--	7	--
Total	1,403	43	27

Note: 1. Source—Canadian Coast Guard, 1996, "Small Vessels Inventory in Canada". Includes estimated number of boats for pleasure use in private Canadian households and boats rented for pleasure/recreational use. Estimates are "12%.

Do You Know How to be Water Smart™?

BE A WATER SMART™ BOATER...

1) KNOW THE BOATING "RULES OF THE ROAD"! More details available from the Canadian Coast Guard (www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca), but you should know that the rules change as of September 1999:

- No child under 12 years of age may operate a powerboat with more than a 10 HP motor.
- Youths 12 to 15 years of age may only operate a boat with a motor over 40 HP if accompanied and directly supervised by someone 16 years or older.
- Minimum age for operating a personal watercraft (PWC) is 16 years of age.
- New small vessel safety equipment and safety precautions requirements for boaters include a new "careless operation of a vessel" offence which requires boaters to travel safely and avoid putting themselves and others at risk.
- Operators of powerboats must have proof of operator competency. As of September 1999, this applied to any person under 16 years. As of September 2002, it applies to any person operating a powerboat less than 4 metres, including PWC's. As of September 2009, it applies to all operators of all powerboats and PWC's.

2) GET TRAINED ON BOATING SAFETY!

- Not only to get your boat operator "licence", but because it's the Water Smart™ thing to do!
- Youth and adults can take the LIFESAVING SOCIETY's B.O.A.T.™ (Boat Operator Accredited Training) safety course at a local facility.

3) KNOW BEFORE YOU GO!

- Avoid potential danger by taking a few minutes with a simple checklist ...What's the weather forecast? Any local hazards? Have your maps or charts? Have your PFD's? Have your first aid kit, tools and spare parts? Safety equipment all working? Have enough fuel? Have let someone know

where you are going and when to expect you back?

4) ALWAYS WEAR A LIFEJACKET!

- Don't just have it in the boat, pick one and **wear** it ...only 6% of Newfoundland drowning victims were wearing a lifejacket or personal flotation device (PFD) properly; 5 out of 6 in powerboats, and 100% in canoes and kayaks were NOT wearing PFD's.
- Over 36% of boating fatalities did not wear a PFD even though it was in the boat.

5) WEAR THE RIGHT GEAR!

- Your PFD of course, but also good sunglasses and appropriate clothing.
- Paddles, whistles and flares are the right gear too.

6) BOAT SOBER ...DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE YOUR BOAT!

- Alcohol intensifies the effect of fatigue, sun, wind and boat motion to adversely affect your balance, judgment and reaction time.
- Alcohol is involved in 26% of all Newfoundland preventable water-related fatalities and over 40% of recreational powerboating and snowmobiling deaths.

7) DRIVE YOUR POWERBOAT OR PWC RESPONSIBLY!

- Look before you act, stay low, drive at moderate speeds, be aware of changing weather conditions, and drive with extreme caution and proper lights after dark.
- Capsizing, swamping or falling overboard involved in 80% of fatal boating incidents in Newfoundland.

BE WATER SMART™ ON ICE...

8) DON'T WALK, PLAY OR SNOWMOBILE ON THIN OR UNKNOWN ICE!

9) RIDE SOBER AND DON'T DRIVE YOUR SNOWMOBILE ON ICE AFTER DARK!

10) LEARN MORE ABOUT ICE SAFETY AND ICE RESCUE...Get the LIFESAVING SOCIETY's ice safety resource guide "Ice: The Winter Killer".

BE A WATER SMART™ SWIMMER...

11) LEARN TO SWIM!

12) NEVER DIVE INTO SHALLOW WATER!

13) DON'T GO IN THE WATER ALONE!
... Always swim with a buddy.

14) ALWAYS SUPERVISE YOUNG CHILDREN NEAR WATER! ...If you're not within arm's reach, you've gone too far!

15) PLAY AND SWIM IN SUPERVISED AREAS!

16) LEARN LIFESAVING SKILLS!

- Go further...Take a LIFESAVING SOCIETY Canadian Swim Patrol, Bronze Star, Bronze Medallion, Bronze Cross, National Lifeguard Service or other lifesaving program at

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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The Lifesaving Society acknowledges assistance in preparing the Newfoundland & Labrador Drowning Report from:

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- Canadian Red Cross Society (CRCS)
- Lifesaving Society and CRCS volunteers and staff
- Royal Newfoundland Constabulary
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Canadian Coast Guard
- Environment Canada

The Lifesaving Society is a national volunteer-based, charitable organization which works to prevent drownings through its training programs, public education, research, consulting and international liaison.