



LIFESAVING SOCIETY

The Lifeguarding Experts

Drowning & Water Safety Fact Sheet

Below is a summary of facts about drowning deaths in Canada. The statistics are from the Lifesaving Society's recently released 2011 *National Drowning Report*, and unless otherwise noted are based on an average of 2005-2007 data. Data was compiled from the Chief Coroner's Offices in all provinces. The year 2007 is the most recent year for which complete data is available.

In Canada:

- Close to 500 people die every year in water-related incidents.
 - In 2007, 480 people drowned in Canada.
- There were more drownings among young adults (+32% among 18-34 year olds) in 2005-2007 vs. 2002-2004.
- Drowning is the second leading cause of preventable death for children under 10 years of age.
- 69 per cent of drownings occurred in lakes, ponds, rivers, streams and oceans and 7 per cent of all drowning deaths occurred in private pools.
- 59 per cent of drowning deaths occurred while the victims were engaged in recreational activities.
- Swimming was the activity during which the largest number of drownings occurred, followed by fishing and powerboating.
- 80 per cent of those who drowned while boating were found NOT wearing a lifejacket.
- Alcohol was a factor in almost 4 in ten drownings (39 per cent).
- 65 per cent of children under the age of 5 were alone near water when they drowned.

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National Water-Related Fatalities (Chief Coroner's Report 2007)

Province	Total #	Percentage of total
Newfoundland & Labrador	16	3%
Nova Scotia	25	5%
Prince Edward Island	4	1%
New Brunswick	17	4%
Quebec	80	17%
Ontario	169	35%
Manitoba	21	4%
Saskatchewan	20	4%
Alberta	41	9%
British Columbia	75	16%
Northwest Territories	4	1%
Nunavut	5	1%
Yukon Territory	3	1%
TOTAL	480	100%

Preliminary Statistics for 2009/2010

While complete final data on drownings and other water-related deaths for 2008-2010 is not yet available from the provincial/territorial Chief Coroners and Medical Examiners, the following interim statistics are available from the Lifesaving Society. Data is derived from media releases, media clippings, news reports and Internet searches. These statistics do not represent all fatalities but give a preliminary idea of trends until coroner's statistics are available.

National Water-Related Fatalities – Preliminary

Province	2009	2010
Newfoundland & Labrador	38	24
Nova Scotia	13	19
Prince Edward Island	1	5
New Brunswick	12	12
Quebec	68	80
Ontario	121	128
Manitoba	15	17
Saskatchewan	9	24
Alberta	22	22
British Columbia	62	67
Northwest Territories	2	2
Nunavut	3	1
Yukon Territory	2	3
TOTAL	368	404

- The total interim number of reported deaths for 2010 was 404, this was an increase of 10 per cent vs. 368 reported deaths in 2009.

National Water-Related Fatalities By Age – Preliminary

Age	2009	2010
0-4 years	14	22
5-12 years	10	18
13-17 years	14	22
18-34 years	116	118
35-49 years	78	80
50+ years	114	121
Unknown	22	28
TOTAL	368	409

- Data show a spike in drownings in 2010 among children under five years of age, with 22 reported drownings in 2010 versus 14 in 2009.

Drowning can occur very quickly, in as little as 10 seconds, and is often silent. The Lifesaving Society offers these drowning prevention tips:

- Restrict and control access to the water. Enclose backyard pools on all four sides with a fence and a self-latching, self-closing gate; drain bathtubs when not in use; empty unattended wading pools and buckets.
- Wear a lifejacket when boating. Toddlers should wear a lifejacket anytime they are near water.
- Don't drink and drive your boat.
- Stay within arms' reach of young children when they are near water – in the backyard, the beach and in the bathroom.
- Go to lifeguard-supervised beaches and pools.
- Learn to swim. Enroll children in swimming lessons and in a swimming survival program such as the Lifesaving Society's Swim to Survive.

About the Lifesaving Society:

The Lifesaving Society is a full-service provider of programs, products and services designed to prevent drowning. We save lives and prevent water-related injury through our training programs, Water Smart[®] public education, drowning prevention research, aquatic safety management and lifesaving sport. Each year in Canada, more than 800,000 Canadians participate in the Society's swimming, lifesaving, lifeguard, first aid and leadership programs. For more information, please visit www.lifesavingsociety.com.

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