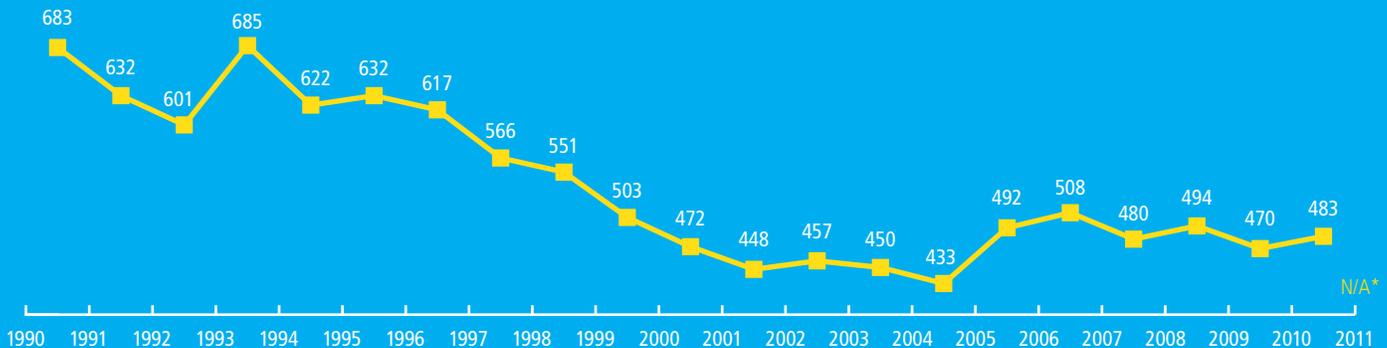


DROWNING REPORT

Prepared for the Lifesaving Society Canada by the Drowning Prevention Research Centre

Canadian Totals 1990 - 2011



*National total unknown due to unavailability of 2011 Alberta data.

Between 2007 and 2011, 836 drownings occurred in Ontario waters. In these most recent Coroner's data collection years, the average drowning rate in Ontario has increased by 8%. The average water-related fatality rate for 2007-2011 was 1.3 per 100,000 population, up from 1.2 in the previous five-year period. Encouragingly, 2011 was the first in the last seven years in which the Ontario death rate declined below 1.3 per 100,000.

Preliminary interim data: For drownings since 2011, only preliminary, interim data from media and internet reports are available. In Ontario these numbers indicate that at least 105 drownings occurred in 2012 and at least 113 occurred in 2013.

Ontario-Water Related Fatalities and Death Rates 2002 - 2011



WHO is drowning?

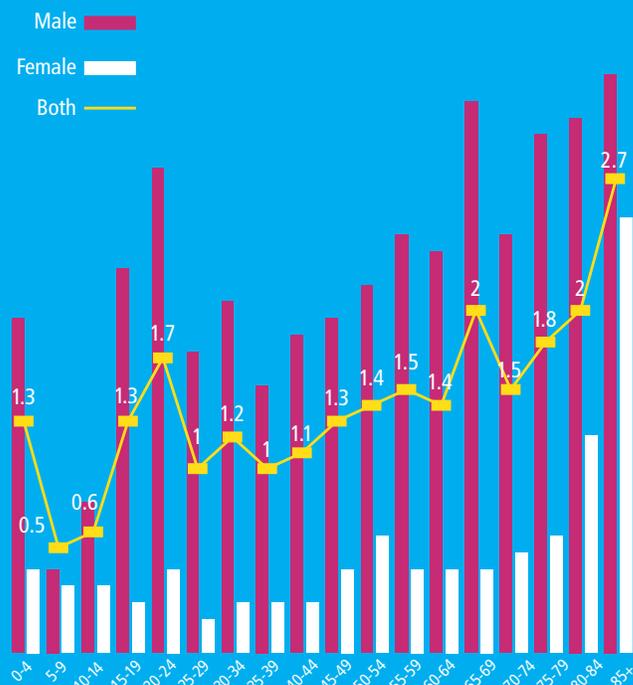
The vast majority of Ontario drowning victims are men, mirroring the trends in national statistics. In the 2007-2011 period, the average yearly water-related fatality rate for men in Ontario was 2.1 per 100,000 population compared to a rate of 0.5 for women, with roughly 8 out of 10 drowning victims being male. Unlike in other provinces however, death rates in Ontario are high among both the very young and much older adults.

Drowning rates for children under 5 years of age and for men and women 65 years of age and older in Ontario are almost 20% higher than the historic national averages for those age groups.

While not as high as Canadian numbers, fatality rates indicate that drowning in young adults is a serious concern in Ontario where 136 15-24-year-olds lost their lives in a water-related incident between 2007 and 2011.

By gender, the highest rates of drowning in Ontario are found among men 15-24, and those over 55 years of age; and among women over 85 years of age.

Death Rate 2007-2011 by Age: Male vs. Female and Both Sexes



WHERE are they drowning?

In the 2007-2011 period, over two thirds (69%) of drownings in Ontario occurred in natural bodies of water with the highest proportion occurring in lakes (48%), followed by flowing water such as rivers and streams (22%). The most common man-made setting for drownings in Ontario is bath tubs (11%) which are especially hazardous for individuals at the extremes of age: children under 5 (22%) and older adults over 80 (42%).

Private pools, which account for 10% of all drownings in Ontario, pose a concern especially in the under-five age group for whom they are the number one setting for drownings (44%).

Very few drownings occur in lifeguard supervised settings: in 2007-2011 only 1% of all drownings in Ontario occurred in a lifeguard supervised setting.

The vast majority (74%) of Ontario drownings occur in urban settings. Approximately 86% of the Ontario population lives in an urban area.

9%
other

10%
pools

22%
rivers

11%
bathtubs

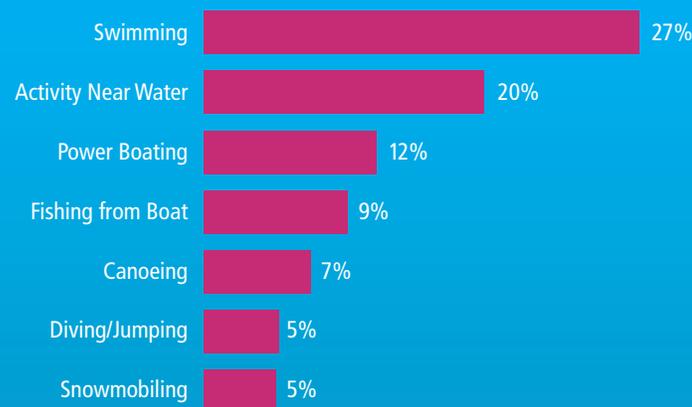
48%
lakes

WHEN are they drowning?

The majority of drownings in Ontario occur during the warmer months with almost two thirds (64%) of water-related fatalities between 2007 and 2011 occurring in May through September. The highest number of drownings occurred in July and August (35%).

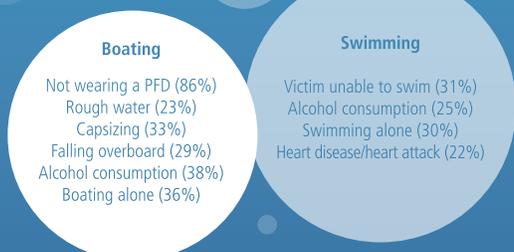
Half (51%) of Ontario drownings occurred on weekend days (Friday, Saturday or Sunday).

Victims by Most Common Recreational Activity

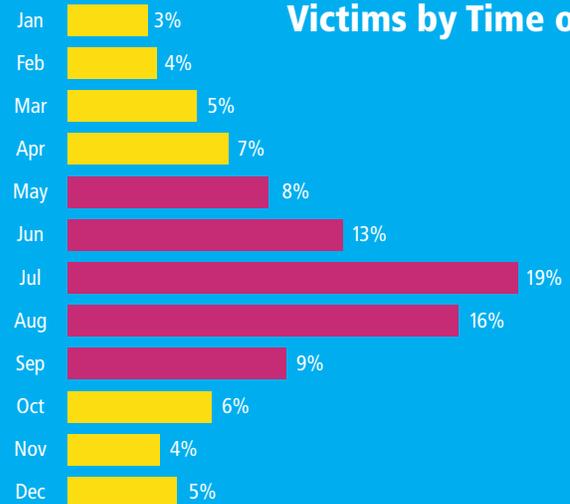


Risk Factors

The major risk factors contributing to drowning incidents in Ontario are consistent with those the Lifesaving Society has identified for the national population in the past.



Victims by Time of Year



WHAT were they doing?

Two thirds (65%) of victims who drowned in Ontario between 2007 and 2011 were engaged in a recreational activity at the time of the incident. Among these, the most common primary recreational activities were swimming (27%), walking, running or playing near water (20%), and power boating (12%).

Daily living incidents account for the next highest proportion of incidents in Ontario (22%), half of which can be attributed to bathing fatalities.

By type of activity, the greatest proportion of incidents occur during an aquatic activity (28%), where the victim intended to be in the water and something went wrong. This is followed closely by boating incidents (23%), the majority of which occurred during powerboat use (63%), or canoeing (20%). Less than 10% of victims who drowned while boating in Ontario were wearing a lifejacket.

Age

< 5

Alone near water (58%)
Supervision was distracted (56%)

5-14

With other minors only (31%)

15-19

Alcohol consumption (29%)
Alone (32%)
After dark (27%)
Not wearing a PFD when relevant (90%)

20-34

Alcohol consumption (40%)
Alone (33%)
After dark (31%)
Not wearing a PFD when relevant (80%)

35-64

Alcohol consumption (38%)
Alone (60%)
Not wearing a PFD when relevant (73%)

65+

Alone (82%)
Not wearing a PFD when relevant (83%)

In Summary

Water-related fatality rates in Ontario are highest for men 15-24 and those over 55.

Drownings are most likely to occur during the summer months in natural bodies of water such as lakes and rivers.

The highest proportion of incidents occur during a recreational activity, most commonly swimming, recreating near the water, or boating.

Despite the dip in Ontario drownings in 2011, the increased death rate demonstrated by the five-year average reinforces the need for continued strong drowning prevention efforts.

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the support, co-operation and efforts of:

- The Office of the Chief Coroner in Ontario which permitted and facilitated confidential access to coroners' reports on preventable water-related deaths.
- The volunteers who contributed their time and energy including data extraction on preventable water-related deaths from coroners' files.
- Tessa Clemens who was primary author and data analyst for this report and Lucie Simoes who provided data input and verification.

Research methodology

Complete data from 1995 - 2010

The water-related death data is extracted from the offices of Canada's Chief Coroners and Medical Examiners in each province/territory.

The scope of this research:

- collects the data needed to profile victims of aquatic incidents, including the circumstances and contributing factors under which these incidents occurred.

- includes all deaths in each provincial/territorial jurisdiction and Canada overall resulting from incidents "in, on or near" water; "near-water" incidents were included if the incident was closely related to water-based recreational, vocational or daily living activity, or if the presence of water appeared to be an attraction contributing to the incident.
- includes only preventable (unintentional) deaths, not deaths due to natural causes, suicide, or homicide.

Interim data

Complete final data on more recent drownings and other water-related deaths are not yet available from the offices of the provincial/territorial Chief Coroners and Medical Examiners. The interim, preliminary data are derived from media releases, media clippings, news reports and internet searches.

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Drowning Prevention Research Centre Canada

The Drowning Prevention Research Centre is the lead agency for drowning and water-incident research in Canada. The Centre conducts research into fatal and non-fatal drowning, significant aquatic injury and rescue interventions.

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The Lifesaving Society

The Lifesaving Society – Canada's lifeguarding experts – works to prevent drowning and water-related injury through its training programs, Water Smart® public education, aquatic safety management, drowning research and lifesaving sport. Annually, over 1,000,000 Canadians participate in the Society's swimming, lifesaving, lifeguard and leadership training programs. The Society sets the standard for aquatic safety in Canada and certifies Canada's National Lifeguards.

