



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®

The Lifeguarding Experts

Newfoundland & Labrador

Drowning Trends

2004

Newfoundland Drownings

The number of drownings and preventable water-related deaths in Newfoundland and Labrador in 2002 (the most recent year for which new data is available) has increased by 12% to 26 in comparison to the previous two years, both years contributing 23 deaths. However, the 2002 statistics still shows a decline from the 1998, five-year peak of 31 deaths (See chart 1).

In 2002, Newfoundland and Labrador experienced a high number of deaths during the summer months of June, July and August (14) - which increased slightly from the 2001 statistics (10). The months of October and November show a significant increase compared to 2001, consuming 7 fatalities, as apposed to only 2 in the previous year.



Three-quarters (73%) of those who drowned in Newfoundland and Labrador in 2002 were male.

Statistics shows that the number of female victims has jumped drastically since the previous year of 2001 from 1 to 7 female fatalities, the highest number in over ten years. In comparison to 2001, 2002 saw very different trends emerging by age. 2 of the 26 drowning victims were children between the ages of 0 and 4 years. 2002 was the first year since 1998 that a child at this age drowned in this province. The number of deaths in the 25-34 age group has dropped significantly from 5 to 0, while the drowning totals in the 35-49, 50-64 and 65+ age groups have all increased. The 35-49 age group still remains to be the high-risk group, with fatalities in this age group peaking at 10 in 2002, the highest since 1994 (see chart 2).

Boating, usually in the ocean, continues to account for 38% of all Newfoundland and Labrador water-related deaths, down 10% from 11 fatalities in 2001 to 10 in 2002. In addition, 27% of drowning deaths occurred during transportation other than boating, 5 out of the 7 were attributed to slippery surfaces causing vehicles to go off the road.

No snowmobiling fatalities occurred throughout the 2002-year, this being the first time since 1999, while the 2000 and 2001 winter seasons claimed 3 victims each.

Alcohol continues to play a role in the drowning statistics of this province, being considered a factor in just over one-quarter (27%) of the drowning cases reported in 2002. Although alcohol remains a factor the number of drownings which are reported to be related to it has been on a steady decline since a peak of 59% in 1996. Another factor commonly associated with drowning in this province is the lack of personal flotation devices used when in, on or around water. Out of the known situations in Newfoundland and Labrador where a lifejacket would be expected 43% of drowning victims were wearing a PFD in 2002, as appose to only 8% in 2001.

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 remain as 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 continue to help reduce the drowning toll.

In addition to new regulations and course the Lifesaving Society's Water Smart® public education

campaign continues to 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 during an aquatic emergency, thus avoiding becoming a drowning statistic.

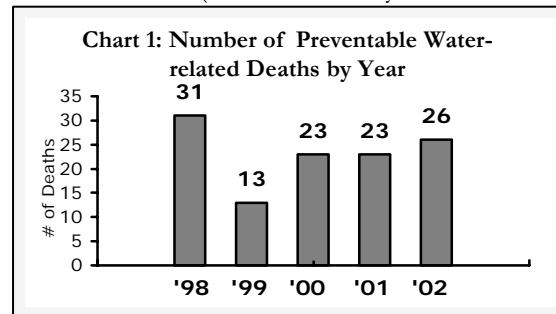
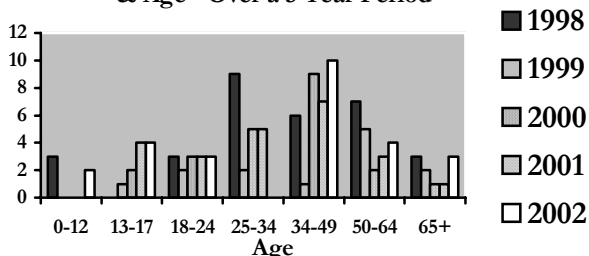


Chart 2: Comparison between Drowning Deaths & Age - Over a 5 Year Period



Inside This Report...

- 2002 Drowning Statistics
- 5 Year Comparison of Drownings in Newfoundland & Labrador
- Drowning Distribution Across Newfoundland & Labrador
- Boating Related Statistics
- Water Smart® Tips
- Contact Us

What Activities Caused Death

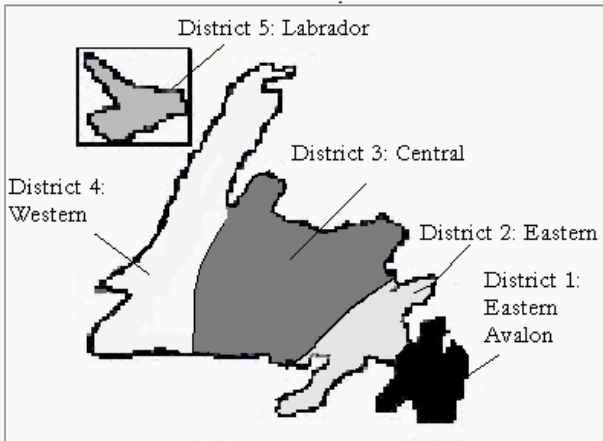
Recreational activities such as boating, swimming and fishing account for half of the preventable water-related deaths in this province, down from nearly 75% in 2001 (see chart 3). Another decline is reflected in the deaths that occurred during occupational activities such as commercial fishing and scuba diving, which decreased by 3 from 2001 to 2002. Daily living activities broke long-term trends in 2002, being involved in more deaths than any year in the previous 10 years. These activities included things such as travel, which accounted for 23% of water-related deaths and bathing/washing, which accounted for 7%. Newfoundland and Labrador also had its first rescue-related drowning since 1998, only the third in 10 years. This rescue attempt was the act of 1 of the 7 female drowning victims.

Chart 3: Number of Preventable Water-Related Deaths By Purpose of Activity

	1996-2000(Avg.)	2001	2002
Recreational	14	17	13
Occupational	5	6	3
Daily Living	4	0	9
Rescue Attempt	0	0	1

LOCATION INFORMATION

The drownings that occurred in 2002 were distributed fairly evenly throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. These statistics reflect the accumulative 5-year drowning total within the province. The highest number of drownings occurred in the Central and Western areas, both seeing an additional 3 fatalities compared to 2001. The Eastern area of the Island seen the lowest fatality rate (4), down from a high of 10 in 2001. While most districts had a higher percentage of male deaths, the western portion of the island had an even number of male and female fatalities (3 each).

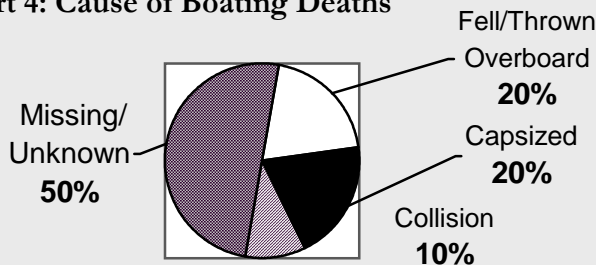


Fishing related deaths occurred only in the areas of Central and Labrador, which also reported a high number of boating-related fatalities. 5-year statistics show that Central has had the highest number of alcohol-related drownings. This trend continued in 2002 as two-thirds (4/6) of central water-related fatalities involved alcohol consumption.

Drowning Statistics Across Newfoundland & Labrador

Districts	2002 Drownings	Total Drownings In 5 Years	Drownings In Ocean	Drownings In Lakes & Ponds	Boating Related Deaths	Fishing Related Deaths	Deaths Involving Alcohol
1	5	25	0	2	1	0	1
2	4	20	3	1	2	0	1
3	6	25	3	3	3	2	4
4	6	27	0	4	1	0	1
5	5	19	3	0	3	1	0

Chart 4: Cause of Boating Deaths



Boating Fatalities

Boating continues to be the leading cause of water-related deaths among people in Newfoundland and Labrador. 10 boating fatalities occurred in 2002. Most of these drowning happened in our oceans (70%), while the remaining occurred in lakes/ponds (30%). From 2001 to 2002 Newfoundland and Labrador has seen a significant increase (20%) in deaths in ponds/lakes.



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Although the numbers have decreased, statistics show that not wearing a lifejacket continues to be a factor in boating fatalities. In 2002 only 20% of boating-related drowning victims were not wearing a PFD, down over 60% from 81% not wearing lifejackets in 2001. The lack of a PFD/lifejacket is more common among males and remains highest in the 18-49 age group. Another factor commonly associated with boating fatalities in Newfoundland and Labrador is alcohol consumption. Although alcohol played a role in 40% of boating deaths in 2002, this statistic is down from 50% in 2001. Weather, including strong winds and rough water, also played a role in 80% of boating fatalities.

Chart 4 illustrates the causes of deaths involved in boating fatalities. Out of the 5 known causes, 2 deaths were attributed to falling/being thrown overboard, down from 7 in 2001. 2 deaths were also attributed to capsizing, down from 4 in 2001 and 1 death was caused by a collision with another object.

To ensure safety when boating it is important to be prepared. Ensure the weather forecast is appropriate for a boating excursion. In addition, always wear a lifejacket/PFD and be sure it is used correctly. Never drink and drive and make certain you are not an occupant of a boat with an intoxicated driver.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR FACTS & FIGURES

Preventable Water-Related Deaths: 1998-2002 FIVE-YEAR TOTAL

Total Number of Deaths: 116

<p>WHO</p> <p><i>Age of Victims:</i></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>0-4 years</td><td style="text-align: right;">5</td></tr> <tr><td>5-12</td><td style="text-align: right;">0</td></tr> <tr><td>13-17</td><td style="text-align: right;">11</td></tr> <tr><td>18-24</td><td style="text-align: right;">14</td></tr> <tr><td>25-34</td><td style="text-align: right;">21</td></tr> <tr><td>35-49</td><td style="text-align: right;">33</td></tr> <tr><td>50-64</td><td style="text-align: right;">21</td></tr> <tr><td>65+</td><td style="text-align: right;">10</td></tr> </table> <p><i>Gender of Victims:</i></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>Male</td><td style="text-align: right;">105</td></tr> <tr><td>Female</td><td style="text-align: right;">11</td></tr> </table> <p>WHERE</p> <p><i>Geographic District:</i></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>District 1</td><td style="text-align: right;">25</td></tr> <tr><td>District 2</td><td style="text-align: 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Did You Know...?

- ✓ In the last 10 years **NONE** of the drownings in Newfoundland and Labrador occurred under **lifeguard supervision**
- ✓ Over **90%** of Newfoundland & Labrador's drowning victims are **male**
- ✓ In 2002, **2 of the 4** children (under 15 years of age) drowned during the **momentary absence** of an adult
- ✓ In 2002, **30%** of **boating-related drowning victims** were **NOT** wearing a lifejacket/PFD or were wearing it incorrectly
- ✓ Statistics show that in the last 5 years **4 out of every 10** victims were **alone** when they drowned

For More Information Contact:

Lifesaving Society
 Newfoundland & Labrador Branch
 P.O. Box 8065, Station "A"
 St. John's, NL
 A1B 3M9
 Telephone: (709) 576-1953
 Fax: (709) 738-1475
 E-Mail: lifeguard@seascape.com
 Website: <http://lifesaving.nfld.net>

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO BE WATER SMART™?

BE A WATER SMART™ BOATER...

1) **KNOW THE BOATING "RULES OF THE ROAD"!** More details are available from the Canadian Coast Guard (www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca), but you should know that the rules changed 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. Youth and adults can take the LIFESAVING SOCIETY's B.O.A.T.™ (Boat Operator Accredited Training) safety course at a local facility.

2) **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**

- Avoid potential danger by taking a few minutes with a simple checklist ...What is 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? Do someone know where you are going and when to expect you back?

3) **ALWAYS WEAR A LIFEJACKET**

- Don't just have it in the boat, pick one and **wear** it!
- In addition to your PFD, also wear good sunglasses and appropriate clothing.

4) **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.

BE WATER SMART™ ON ICE

- **DON'T WALK, PLAY OR SNOWMOBILE ON THIN OR UNKNOWN ICE!**
- **RIDE SOBER AND DON'T DRIVE YOUR SNOWMOBILE ON ICE AFTER DARK!**
- **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...

- **LEARN TO SWIM!**
- **NEVER DIVE INTO SHALLOW WATER!**
- **DON'T GO IN THE WATER ALONE!** ... Always swim with a buddy.
- **ALWAYS SUPERVISE YOUNG CHILDREN NEAR WATER!** ...If you're not within arm's reach, you've gone too far!
- **PLAY AND SWIM IN SUPERVISED AREAS!**
- **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 your local pool or aquatic facility.

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

- Office of the Chief Forensic Pathologist, Newfoundland Department of Justice
- 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.