



Boating Fatalities

The number of drownings and preventable water-related deaths in Newfoundland and Labrador increased during 1998 (the most recent year for which new data is available). The 1998 total of 31 deaths is down from the peak of 35 deaths in 1995, but the highest total in the past three years.

Taking population into consideration, the 31 Newfoundland and Labrador deaths in 1998 translate to a preventable water-related death rate of 5.6 deaths per 100,000 population. This is the highest death rate during the past three years, more than 3 times the Canadian average of 1.8, which shows a downward trend for the second year in a row. Newfoundland and Labrador unfortunately continues to have the highest preventable water-related death rate among the Canadian provinces.

By time of year, the rise in Newfoundland drownings during 1998 reflected fewer fall and winter deaths during occupational and daily living activities. Fewer fall/winter deaths involved exposure/hypothermia and alcohol in 1998.

Boating continues to account for half of all Newfoundland water-related deaths - usually on the ocean, involving recreational or commercial fishing. In total more than half of water-related deaths occur during recreation activity. Sport fishing deaths remain unchanged and remains one of the two recreational activities most involved in water-related deaths - the other being snowmobiling.

Commercial fishing deaths down 20%

With one in 9 Newfoundland households owning a boat for pleasure and recreational use, pleasure boating accounts for approximately 50% of water-related deaths. Of these deaths 2/3rds occur on the ocean, with the victim falling overboard. Swamping and capsizing occurs more frequently on lakes, ponds and rivers and is the most common.