



2005 Edition Newfoundland and Labrador Snowmobiling Report

Newfoundland & Labrador ICE & WATER-RELATED FATALITIES

A Special Report from the Lifesaving Society

During the five-year period between 1999 and 2003, Newfoundland & Labrador has seen a total of 8 preventable ice-related snowmobiling deaths. Although these numbers have decreased over the past 10 years, National statistics show that Newfoundland & Labrador has the 3rd highest fatality rate due to snowmobile drownings in Canada. While 2002 drowning statistics showed a dramatic change in the snowmobiling trends for this province, confirming that no snowmobiling-related drownings occurred, 2003 has, unfortunately, seen 2 deaths again this year.

In addition to snowmobile-related fatalities, 10 victims from Newfoundland & Labrador drowned while walking on or near water or ice in the past 5 years. 80% of these incidences occurred on the ocean, while the remaining 20% occurred at a river or stream. Alcohol was a factor in 20% of these drownings and 7 of the 10 victims were alone at the time of the incident.

Profile of Ice-Related Snowmobiling Fatalities

Who are the victims?

- ⌚ 88% of snowmobile drowning victims are male
- ⌚ 88% are between the ages of 13 and 49 with 38% between 18-34 alone

When did fatalities occur?

- ⌚ 100% occurred between January and April; January, March & April with 30% each
- ⌚ 63% of the recreational snowmobiling incidents took place during the weekend, while the daily living snowmobiling incidents were split 50/50 on weekdays and weekends

What time of day did the incidents occur?

- ⌚ Almost 40% of snowmobiling fatalities occurred in the evening hours of 6pm to 10pm, while 25% occurred in the afternoon and 25% after midnight

Where did the fatalities occur?

- ⌚ 63% of all snowmobiling fatalities in the past 5 years occurred in Labrador
- ⌚ 6 incidents occurred on the Ocean, while 2 occurred on Rivers/Streams

Key Risk Factors:

- ⌚ 50% of Newfoundland and Labrador ice-related snowmobiling deaths involved alcohol
- ⌚ 75% of ice-related snowmobiling fatalities after dark
- ⌚ 63% of ice-related snowmobiling deaths can be attributed to driving on thin/soft ice, while 37% can be attributed to driving into open holes.
- ⌚ 50% of snowmobile victims who drowned were not wearing any form of floatation device, while the remaining 50% is unknown

**Newfoundland & Labrador Water-Related Snowmobiling Deaths:
1999-2003 Five-year Totals**

<u>WHO</u>	
Age	
<18	2
18-34	3
35-49	2
50+	1
Sex	
Male	7
Female	1
<u>WHEN</u>	
Month	
Nov-Dec	0
Jan-Apr	8
May-Oct	0
Day	
Mon-Thurs	3
Fri-Sun	5
Time	
Afternoon	1
6pm-Midnight	3
After Midnight	2
Unknown	2
<u>WHERE</u>	
Setting	
Ocean	6
River/Stream	2

LOCATION OF SNOWMOBILE-RELATED DROWNINGS

Over the past 5 years, Labrador has seen the highest fatality rate involving snowmobile incidents, accounting for 5 of the 8 deaths. Snowmobile-related drownings account for approximately 70% of all the drownings that have occurred in Labrador over the past 5 years. The Labrador region consumed the lives of both victims that drowned during daily living activities. These statistics reflect the high usage of snowmobiles in this region of the island. Other areas that have seen drowning deaths by snowmobile were: Eastern, Central and Western Newfoundland, where each location had 1 snowmobile-relating drowning between 1999 and 2003.

BE WATER SMART™ ON ICE

- DON'T WALK OR PLAY ON SNOWMOBILE ON THIN OR UNKNOWN ICE!
- RIDE SOBER AND DON'T DRIVE YOUR SNOWMOBILE ON ICE AFTER DARK! Alcohol beverage consumption, along with riding after dark are the leading factors contributing to ice-related snowmobiling deaths.
- RIDE IN DAYLIGHT! If driving after dark, drive with extreme caution, proper lights and stay off ice.
- DON'T RIDE ON ICE WHEN YOUR VISIBILITY IS IMPAIRED! Ride at slow enough speeds so that you have time to react to surprises. Don't ride after dark, in blowing snow or heavy rain, and guard against snow blindness with UV-protective sunglasses.
- WEAR A BUOYANT SNOWMOBILE SUIT.
- This will combat submersion and help protect against the numbing effects of hypothermia.
- ALWAYS RIDE WITH A BUDDY! 40% of snowmobiling immersion fatalities occur while people are riding alone.
- LEARN MORE ABOUT ICE SAFETY AND ICE RESCUE...GET THE LIFESAVING SOCIETY'S ICE SAFETY RESOURCE GUIDE "ICE: THE WINTER KILLER".

The Lifesaving Society acknowledges assistance in preparing the Snowmobile Drowning Report from:

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- ⌚ Environment Canada
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