



Newfoundland & Labrador ICE & SNOWMOBILE DROWNING FATALITIES

A Special Report from the Lifesaving Society

A recent study of Newfoundland and Labrador snowmobiling fatalities found that ice-related “immersion” incidents account for a high proportion of all snowmobiling deaths in the province. Between 2001 and 2005 eleven (11) people died in preventable ice-related snowmobiling incidents in the province. This does not include fatal snowmobiling incidents on land, which usually were collisions or ejection incidents, where the victims were thrown from their sleds. Although these numbers have decreased over the past 10 years, statistics show that Newfoundland &

Number of Preventable Ice-Related Snowmobiling Deaths in Newfoundland and Labrador:

Year	Recreational	Daily Living	Total
2001	3	0	3
2002	0	0	0
2003	2	0	2
2004	2	0	2
2005	3	1	3
Total	10	1	11

2001-2005 Newfoundland & Labrador Water Related Snowmobiling Deaths (11)			
Totals	Rec.	D.L.	Total
	10	1	11
WHO	01-04 Avg.		2005
Age			
<18	2		0
18-34	1		1
35-49	3		3
50+	1		0
Sex			
Male	6		4
Female	1		0
WHEN			
Month			
Nov-Dec	0		0
Jan-Apr	6		4
May-Oct	1		0
Day			
Mon-Thurs	2		1
Fri-Sun	5		3
Time			
5am-6pm	0		0
6pm-Midnight	2		1
Midnight-5am	2		1
Unknown	3		1
WHERE			
Setting			
Ocean	5		2
Lake/Pond	1		0
River/Stream	1		2

Labrador has the 3rd highest fatality rate due to snowmobile drownings in Canada. Drowning statistics show a dramatic increase in the snowmobiling trends for this province, confirming that four (4) snowmobiling-related drownings occurred during the 2005 year, an increase of fifty percent (50%) from the previous year. Three (3) ice-related snowmobiling fatalities involved recreational activities while one (1) involved daily living activities.

In addition to snowmobile-related fatalities, 4 victims from Newfoundland & Labrador drowned while walking on or near water (4)/ice. Fifty percent of these incidences occurred on the ocean, while the remaining 50% occurred at a lake or pond. There were no reported fatalities on river or stream again this year Alcohol was a factor in just over 75% of snowmobile-related drownings and 3 of the 4 victims were alone at the time of the incident.

Profile of Ice-Related Snowmobiling Fatalities

Who are the victims?

- ⌚ 100% of snowmobile drowning victims are men (4 victims in 2005)
- ⌚ 100% are between the ages of 18 and 49

When did fatal incidents occur?

- ⌚ 100% occurred between the months of January and April
- ⌚ 75% of the recreational snowmobiling incidents happened during the weekend, while all of the daily living snowmobiling incidents happened on weekdays.

What time of day did the incidents occur?

- ⌚ 75% (3) of snowmobiling fatalities occurred in the evening hours of 6pm to 10pm, an increase of 35% compared to 40% the previous year, while 25% occurred after midnight.

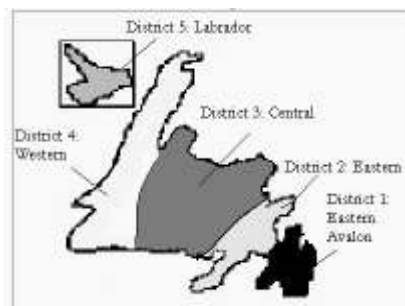
Where did the fatalities occur?

- ⌚ The only region to experience no fatalities was the Western region of the province
- ⌚ There was only one(1) reported death in Labrador this year
- ⌚ 2 incidents occurred on the Ocean, 1 incident occurred on Lakes/Ponds, zero on River/Stream, a 33% decrease from the previous year

Key Risk Factors:

- ⌚ Alcohol continues to play a role in the snowmobiling drowning fatalities of this province. During 2005, 75% of Newfoundland and Labrador ice-related snowmobiling deaths and 50% (5) of all ice-related deaths involved alcohol.
- ⌚ 33.3% of ice-related snowmobiling fatalities occurred during the hours of darkness.
- ⌚ 100% of ice-related snowmobiling deaths were attributed to driving into open holes in the ice. This is an increase of 50% from the previous year.
- ⌚ 50% of snowmobile victims who drowned were not wearing any form of floatation device. Only 25% (1) of the victims were wearing a floatation device, while it is unknown if the remaining 25% of victims were wearing any form of floatation. When compared to the previous year, 2005 saw a 25% decrease in the number of individuals using a PFD or lifejacket.

LOCATION OF SNOWMOBILE-RELATED DROWNINGS



Over the past five years, from 2001 to 2005, Labrador has seen the highest fatality rate involving snowmobile incidents, accounting for 4 of the total drownings. Snowmobile-related drownings account for 50% of all the drownings that have occurred in Labrador over the past 5 years. The Labrador region consumed the life of the victim that drowned during daily living activity. These statistics reflect the high usage of snowmobiles in this region of the province. Other areas that were impacted by snowmobiling related drowning deaths were Eastern and Central, which each reported one (1) snowmobile-relating drowning in 2005. The only region to report no casualties this year was the Western Region of the province.



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! 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".

SWIM TO SURVIVE

The Canadian Swim to Survive standard is a simple straightforward and focused natural standard that defines the minimum swimming skills needed to survive an unexpected fall into deep water.

Roll into deep water – Tread water (1min) = Swim (50mtrs)

Learn more, take the Swim to Survive Challenge at your local pool.

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

- ⌚ Office of the Chief Forensic Pathologist, NL Department of Justice
- ⌚ Canadian Red Cross Society (CRCS)
- ⌚ Lifesaving Society and CRCS volunteers and staff
- ⌚ Canadian Coast Guard
- ⌚ Environment Canada
- ⌚ Royal Newfoundland Constabulary
- ⌚ Royal Canadian Mounted Police



“Are You SledSmartSLEDSMART is a province-wide, snowmobile safety awareness program. This is the first of its kind in the province as it incorporates locally developed materials. This is important because it deals with the highest cause of snowmobile-related deaths in the province...DROWNING.

For more information contact:

Lifesaving Society
 Newfoundland and 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@nl.rogers.com
 Web site: www.lifesavingnl.ca