

2018 PENNSYLVANIA BOATING ACCIDENT ANALYSIS

By Ryan C. Walt – Boating Accident Review Officer

The total number of reported recreational boating accidents in Pennsylvania in 2018 decreased from 2017. Boaters and Waterways Conservation Officers reported 61 recreational boating accidents of all types, a decrease of 8 reported accidents, or 13% less than 2017. The number of vessels involved in reported accidents totaled 81, a decrease of 15 from 2017. Accident reports indicated 33 injuries requiring medical treatment, 18 less than in 2017. Property damage to vessels totaled \$206,784 which was \$43,446 less than the amount reported in the previous year. One accident comprised \$40,387 or 20% of that total. Federal and state law requires that accidents involving death, disappearance, injuries requiring medical treatment beyond first aid, and property damage exceeding \$2,000 be reported to the state. Accidents with lesser property damage and/or minor injuries are not required to be reported.

Of the 61 reported accidents in 2018, the most common type of accident was capsizing. The types of reported accidents were as follows:

Capsizing	17	Skier mishap	3
Falls overboard	12	Flooding/swamping/wake	3
Collision with vessel	10	Fall in boat	2
Ejected from vessel	4	Struck submerged/fixed obj.	1
Fire/explosion	4	Person leaves vessel	1
Grounding/sinking	3	Dam	1

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In 2018, thirteen recreational boating accidents resulted in 14 fatalities. This is a decrease of 1 fatality from the previous year and above the last 10-year average of 12.3 victims. Factoring in the 2018 fatalities, Pennsylvania's new 10-year average is 12.9 victims. Only three of the 14 victims in 2018 were wearing a life jacket at the time of the mishap that resulted in death. Seven of the 14 victims (50%) were not wearing a life jacket but did have them onboard the boat.

The attached "Recap of 2018 Pennsylvania Boating Fatalities" is a summary of all fatal recreational boating accidents in the Commonwealth that year. The recap's last page details statistical information about 2018's fatal boating accidents. This recap is intended to provide information to illustrate the importance of safe boating practices and to help improve boating safety in the Commonwealth.

RECAP OF 2018 PENNSYLVANIA BOATING FATALITIES

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| 1. | 2 Fatalities
05/07/18 | Susquehanna River
10:00 p.m. | Dauphin County
Monday |
|----|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|

A 25 year old adult female and a 3 year old juvenile female lost their lives when the boat they were passengers in capsized in the downstream boil of the Dock St. Dam. Both were thrown from the 15 foot Jonboat. A third individual, the adult male operator was also thrown from the boat and but was able to swim to shore. Alcohol and controlled substances played a role in the accident. The victims and operator had no formal boating safety education. Operator inexperience and cold water immersion may have been factors.

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| 2. | 1 Fatality
05/25/18 | Delaware River
03:15 p.m. | Monroe County
Friday |
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A 39-year-old male is missing and presumed dead as a result of capsizing a canoe. The victim and another individual onboard were paddling on the Delaware River when the canoe they were operating capsized. The water levels were running higher than normal due to recent rains in the area which created a hazardous environment for novice paddlers. No lifejackets were worn during the time of the accident and it is unknown if the victim had taken a formal boating safety education course. Operator inexperience and cold water immersion may have been factors.

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| 3. | 1 Fatality
06/09/18 | Lackawanna Lake
12:37 p.m. | Lackawanna County
Saturday |
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A 24-year-old male is deceased as a result of capsizing a kayak. The operator was in a kayak when it capsized on Lackawanna Lake in approximately 5 feet of water. The victim was described as a “very good swimmer” and was offered a lifejacket before launching the kayak but declined. The victim was out from shore approximately 80 yards when the kayak capsized. The victim was submerged in the water approximately 10 minutes before being recovered by another kayak operator. CPR was performed until emergency personnel arrived. The victim was transported to Geisinger Hospital in Scranton and was put on life support. The victim was later declared deceased. No lifejackets were worn during the time of the accident and it is unknown if the victim had taken a formal boating safety education course. Operator inexperience and cold water immersion may have been factors.

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| 4. | 1 Fatality
06/22/18 | Glendale Lake
08:10 p.m. | Cambria County
Friday |
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A 67-year-old male is deceased as a result of falling overboard. The victims 17ft open motorboat was found onshore near Beaver Valley Marina with the outboard motor running and the boats throttle shift in the neutral position. A search for the victim began and the victim was eventually recovered multiple days later. No lifejackets were worn during the time of the accident and the victim had not taken a formal boating safety education course.

5. 1 Fatality Mountain Spring Lake Monroe County
07/02/2018 7:30 p.m. Monday

A 75-year old male lost his life when he fell overboard while attempting to get out of his 12ft open motorboat at the shoreline. The victim was found face down in the water with a cut on his head that appeared to have occurred during the fall. The victim had multiple health issues that might have contributed to the accident. No lifejackets were worn during the time of the accident and the victim had not taken a formal boating safety education course.

6. 1 Fatality Susquehanna River, Lake Clarke York County
07/03/2018 7:52 p.m. Tuesday

A 35-year old male lost his life when he fell overboard from his 20ft open motorboat while approaching the gas dock. The victim was recovered the following evening. The victim was not wearing a lifejacket and could not swim. The victim had taken a formal boating safety education course. Alcohol use may have been a factor.

7. 1 Fatality Quemahoning Reservoir Somerset County
07/09/18 01:30 p.m. Monday

An 18-year-old male is deceased as a result of taking off his lifejacket and leaving an 11ft paddleboard to possibly retrieve his hat that had fallen into the water. Witnesses observed the victim swimming around the paddleboard for several minutes before he did not surface. Search efforts for the victim lasted 6 days before recovery. The victim had not taken a formal boating safety education course. Operator inexperience may have been a factor.

8. 1 Fatality Raystown Lake Huntingdon County
07/27/18 06:05 p.m. Friday

A 71-year-old male is deceased as a result of falling overboard on a 14ft open motorboat he was a passenger on after it had hit a wake caused by a larger vessel. A witness on a personal watercraft observed the incident and attempted to assist and was able to get the victim to hang on to the side of the personal watercraft. The operator of the boat that made contact with the wake and the operator of the personal watercraft attempted to give the victim a lifejacket but the victim stated that that they did not feel well and then became unconscious. They were able to get the victim back on to the boat and began CPR. A pontoon boat saw the commotion and came over to assist. The victim was transported onto the pontoon boat and CPR was resumed until they arrived at Seven Points public launch where EMS took over. The victim was pronounced dead shortly after by EMS personnel. No lifejackets were worn during the time of the incident and the victim had not taken a formal boating safety education course.

9. 1 Fatality Delaware River Northampton County
08/02/18 12:30 p.m. Thursday

A 52-year-old male is deceased as a result of capsizing a 14ft canoe in the Delaware River. The victim was paddling in the Delaware River with two of his family members onboard when they paddled through a swiftwater area in the river. The canoe became unbalanced causing the family to capsize. One of the passengers was wearing a lifejacket but the victim and other passenger were not. Both of the

passengers were able to make it to shore but lost sight of the victim through the swiftwater. The victim had not taken a formal boating safety education course. Inexperience and elevated water levels may have been a factor. The victim was later recovered.

10.	1 Fatality 08/05/18	Allegheny River 03:00 p.m.	Armstrong County Sunday
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A 57-year-old male is deceased as a result of being ejected from the 18ft race boat he was operating. The victim was operating his 300hp race boat and went to overtake another vessel when his vessel hit a wake and became airborne. The victim was wearing a lifejacket at the time of the accident and was ejected from the vessel. Passengers of the other vessel and other individuals quickly came to provide assistance. The victim was pulled onto a pontoon boat and CPR was preformed immediately until emergency personnel arrived. The victim was never responsive or breathing after the accident. The victim was an experienced boat operator but had not taken a formal boating safety education course.

11.	1 Fatality 08/05/18	Lehigh River 04:30 p.m.	Carbon County Sunday
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A 67-year-old female passenger is deceased as a result of falling overboard when the whitewater raft she was paddling in struck a rock on the Lehigh River. The operator and victim were ejected into the river when another raft then struck the victim's raft from the rear. The victim, and the operator were wearing lifejackets. The victim was alert while floating downriver and was assisted by a river guide and other rafters. Upon bringing the victim to shore, she became unconscious and CPR was performed. EMS arrived and continued performing CPR, and she was later pronounced deceased at the hospital. The victim was a below average swimmer and had not taken a formal boating safety education course. The victim had no previous experience in whitewater rafting. The victims health may have been a contributing factor.

12.	1 Fatality 08/25/18	Allegheny River 10:28 a.m.	Allegheny County Saturday
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A 51-year-old male is deceased as a result of jumping overboard off a 17ft open motorboat while fishing in the Allegheny River. The operator of the boat threw the victim a throwable personal floatation device and the victim began to swim towards shore with the throwable device. The victim then stopped and let go of the throwable device and disappeared. The victim was recovered several hours later. The victim was not wearing a lifejacket and had not taken a formal boating safety education course.

13.	1 Fatality 09/01/18	Lehigh River 1:00 p.m.	Carbon County Saturday
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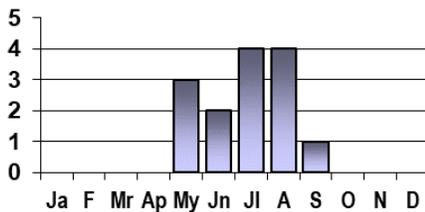
A 33-year-old male is deceased as a result of being ejected from the 12 ft inflatable whitewater raft he was paddling. The victim was paddling through a section of rapids on the Lehigh River within the Lehigh Gorge State Park when he was ejected from the raft. Upon being ejected into the river, the victim's foot became entrapped under a rock, and the victim went underwater. Several attempts were made by the passengers onboard the victim's raft and the River Guides to rescue the victim but they

were unsuccessful. The victim was wearing a personal flotation device and was believed to be an above average swimmer. The victim had not taken a formal boating education course and had no previous experience in whitewater rafting.

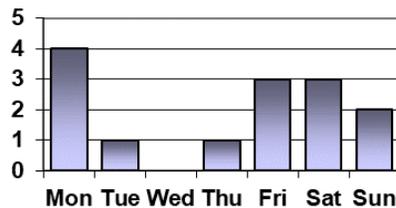
TOTALS FOR 2018: There were 61 reportable recreational boating accidents, 33 injuries requiring medical treatment, and 13 accidents resulting in 14 fatalities.

		FATAL ACCIDENTS	FATALITIES
LOCATION	Rivers	8	9
	Lakes	5	5
TYPE OF BOAT (Carrying victim)	Motorboat	6	7
	Paddlecraft	7	7
TYPE OF ACCIDENT	Falls overboard	7	7
	Capsizing	3	3
	Depart vessel voluntarily	1	1
	Ejected from vessel	1	1
	Dam	1	2
LIFE JACKETS	Worn	3	3
	None/Insufficient units onboard	3	3
	Onboard but not worn	7	8
HYPOTHERMIA OR COLD WATER SHOCK (Possible factor)		3	4
ALCOHOL (Any proven use regardless of BAC)		2	3

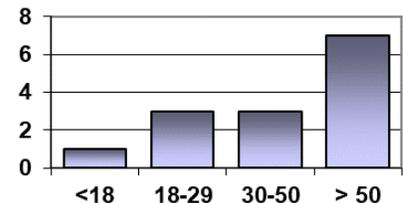
FATALITIES by MONTH



FATALITIES by DAY



FATALITIES by AGE



COLD WEATHER DATA

The charts below show the number of accidents over the past 16 years and accidents since 2012 when the mandatory coldwater lifejacket wear regulation was enacted. The percentage of accident resulting in fatalities is higher from November thru April due to cold water temperatures resulting in cold water shock to victims of accidents.

