

2015 PENNSYLVANIA BOATING ACCIDENT ANALYSIS

By Ryan C. Walt – Boating Accident Review Officer

The total number of reported recreational boating accidents in Pennsylvania in 2015 decreased from 2014. Boaters and Waterways Conservation Officers reported 58 recreational boating accidents of all types, a decrease of 12 reported accidents, or 17% less than 2014. The number of vessels involved in reported accidents totaled 77, a decrease of 1 from 2014. Accident reports indicated 44 injuries requiring medical treatment, 1 less than in 2014. Property damage to vessels totaled \$91,493 which was \$124,144 less than the amount reported in the previous year. One accident comprised \$25,000 or 27% 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 58 reported accidents in 2015, the most common type of accident was skier mishaps. The types of reported accidents were as follows:

Skier Mishap	12	Grounding/Sinking	4
Capsizing	10	Fall in boat	2
Collision with vessel	9	Struck submerged object	2
Falls overboard	8	Struck by boat	1
Fire/explosion	5	Struck by prop	1
Ejected from vessel	4		

In 2015, four recreational boating accidents resulted in 4 fatalities. This is a decrease of 13 fatalities that occurred in 2014 and below the last 10-year average of 13.4 victims. Factoring in the 2015 fatalities, Pennsylvania's new 10-year average is 13.2 victims. Only one of the 4 victims in 2015 was wearing a life jacket at the time of the mishap that resulted in death. Two of the 4 victims (50%) were not wearing a life jacket but did have them onboard the boat.

The attached "Recap of 2015 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 2015'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 2015 PENNSYLVANIA BOATING FATALITIES

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. | 1 Fatality
4/23/15 | Monongahela River
5:00 p.m. | Allegheny County
Thursday |
|----|-----------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|

A 46-year-old male died after his 12-foot kayak capsized. He had paddled into the river to retrieve an object. Upon returning to the launch ramp, the kayak capsized and he went under the water. He was reportedly wearing a life jacket but it may not have been properly fitted or secured. Cold water shock due to water temperatures may have been a factor. It is unknown if he had any formal instruction in boating safety.

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|----|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2. | 1 Fatality
7/9/15 | Pinchot Lake
7:15 a.m. | York County
Thursday |
|----|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|

After not arriving for work on time, a 58-year-old male was discovered with no signs of life, still attached to his capsized racing scull. He was transported to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead. The victim was not wearing a life jacket and was not required to have one on board the 24-foot racing scull. It is unknown if he had any formal instruction in boating safety.

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|----|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 3. | 1 Fatality
7/27/15 | Pocono Summit Lake
unknown | Monroe County
Monday |
|----|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|

A deceased 75-year-old male was found after his overturned kayak was discovered. The victim was not wearing a life jacket however one was in the kayak. Alcohol may have been a factor. It is unknown if he had any formal instruction in boating safety.

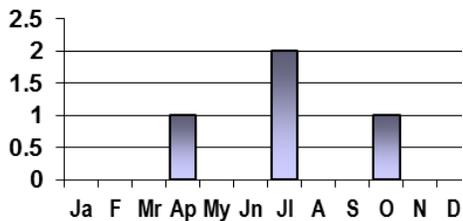
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|----|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 4. | 1 Fatality
10/29/15 | Lake Arthur
unknown | Butler County
Thursday |
|----|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|

A deceased 51-year-old male was found after he did not return from a fishing trip in his canoe. The individual was boating alone during moderate to high winds. Water temperature was 51 degrees so cold water shock may have been a factor. The boater had only 6 months or less of boating experience and was not wearing a life jacket however there was one onboard. It is unknown if the individual had any formal instruction in boating safety. Drugs or alcohol may have also been a contributing factor.

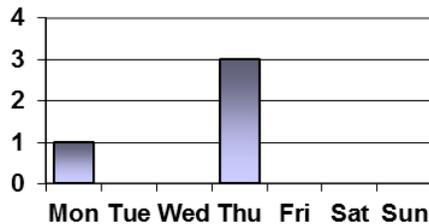
TOTALS FOR 2015: There were 58 reportable recreational boating accidents, 44 injuries requiring medical treatment, and 4 accidents resulting in 4 fatalities.

		FATAL ACCIDENTS	FATALITIES
LOCATION	Rivers	1	1
	Lakes	3	3
TYPE OF BOAT (Carrying victim)	Canoe	1	1
	Kayak	2	2
	Racing Scull	1	1
TYPE OF ACCIDENT	Capsized	4	4
LIFE JACKETS	Worn	1	1
	None/Insufficient units onboard	1	1
	Onboard but not worn	2	2
HYPOTHERMIA OR COLD WATER SHOCK (Possible factor)		2	2
ALCOHOL (Any proven use regardless of BAC)		2	2

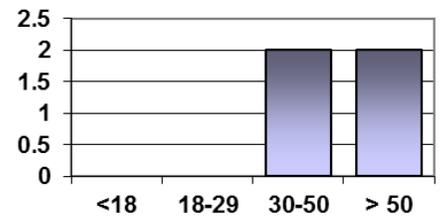
FATALITIES by MONTH



FATALITIES by DAY



FATALITIES by AGE



COLD WEATHER DATA

The chart below shows the number of accidents over the past 13 years is much greater from April thru August; however 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.

