

2016 PENNSYLVANIA BOATING ACCIDENT ANALYSIS

By Ryan C. Walt – Boating Accident Review Officer

The total number of reported recreational boating accidents in Pennsylvania in 2016 increased from 2015. Boaters and Waterways Conservation Officers reported 70 recreational boating accidents of all types, an increase of 12 reported accidents, or 17% more than 2015. The number of vessels involved in reported accidents totaled 80, an increase of 2 from 2015. Accident reports indicated 42 injuries requiring medical treatment, 2 less than in 2015. Property damage to vessels totaled \$202,006 which was \$110,513 more than the amount reported in the previous year. One accident comprised \$40,000 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 70 reported accidents in 2016, the most common type of accident was collision with fixed objects. The types of reported accidents were as follows:

Collision with fixed obj.	12	Collision with floating obj.	4	
Falls overboard	9	Collision with vessel	4	4
Skier mishap	9	Struck by boat	2	
Flooding/swamping	7	Improper loading	2	
Fire/explosion	6	Fall in boat	2	
Capsizing	5	Ejected from vessel	2	
Grounding/Sinking	5	Struck by prop	1	

In 2016, nine recreational boating accidents resulted in 11 fatalities. This is an increase of 7 fatalities that occurred in 2015 and below the last 10-year average of 11.8 victims. Factoring in the 2016 fatalities, Pennsylvania's new 10-year average is 11.9 victims. Only three of the 11 victims in 2016 were wearing a life jacket at the time of the mishap that resulted in death. Seven of the 11 victims (64%) were not wearing a life jacket but did have them onboard the boat.

The attached "Recap of 2016 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 2016'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 2016 PENNSYLVANIA BOATING FATALITIES

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|----|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. | 1 Fatality
2/22/16 | Aughwick Creek
Unknown | Huntingdon County
Monday |
|----|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|

An unpowered Jon boat used to access property on the Aughwick Creek was found on 02/22/16 with the deceased owner on board approximately one mile below the property. The victim was found in the stern of the boat with his legs hanging over the side in the water. There was no safety equipment on board. The victim was not wearing a lifejacket and it is unknown if the victim had any prior formal boating safety education. Hypothermia and alcohol may have been factors.

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| 2. | 1 Fatality
7/1/16 | Little Indian Springs Lake
3:00PM | Pike County
Friday |
|----|----------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|

The victim capsized a kayak approximately 30 feet from shore. The victim was not wearing a lifejacket and could not swim. It is not known if the victim had taken any formal boating safety education. According to witnesses, the victim went under the water and never came back up. Local rescue dive teams recovered the victim body later that evening.

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|----|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 3. | 1 Fatality
7/23/16 | Westcolang Lake
7:55PM | Pike County
Saturday |
|----|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|

The operator of a recreational motorboat stopped their boat and entered the water to go swimming. Upon entering the water the victim began to have difficulties and yelled for help. An individual onboard attempted to maneuver the boat closer to the victim but was having difficulty due to the wind and wave action. The individual then lost sight of the victim. The victim was recovered by rescue divers that later that evening and was pronounced deceased. The victim was not wearing a lifejacket and it is not known if the victim had any formal boating safety education. Alcohol may have been a factor.

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| 4. | 3 Fatalities
8/20/2016 | Allegheny River
1:30AM | Clarion County
Saturday |
|----|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|

Early Saturday morning there was a motorboat accident on the Allegheny River in the Waterson area of Clarion county near the Armstrong county line. Four persons were onboard, three of which are now deceased. The lone survivor was flown to an area hospital for treatment. The vessel ran aground at an apparent high rate of speed, rolled over and was found upside down. The victims were not wearing lifejackets and it is not known if they had any prior boating safety education. Alcohol and high rate of speed may have been factors.

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| 5. | 1 Fatality
8/20/2016 | West Branch Susquehanna River
9:10AM | Lycoming County
Saturday |
|----|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------|

The operator of a cabin cruiser was cruising at approximately 30 mph when two passengers jumped from the boat into the water. The victim surfaced but was having noticeable difficulties. The other

passenger attempted to assist but the victim went under and failed to resurface. The victim's body was located later that day. The victim was not wearing a lifejacket and had no prior formal boating safety education. Alcohol may have been a factor.

6.	1 Fatality 9/15/16	Chambers Lake 11:20AM	Chester County Thursday
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The operator of a small motorboat, fell overboard after his boat capsized at Chambers Lake. The accident was witnessed by several kayakers who raced to the scene to assist but the victim never returned to the surface. Witnesses indicated that the operator went to the rear of his vessel and was seen adjusting his motor when the bow rose out of the water, capsizing the boat and throwing the victim overboard. The victim was not wearing a lifejacket and it is unknown if the victim had any formal boating safety education.

7.	1 Fatality 10/13/2016	Susquehanna River 12:30AM	Northumberland County Thursday
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The victim lost their life when the vessel they were fishing from capsized below a low head dam in Northumberland County. The victim was fishing with a friend below the PPL Dam near Hummel's Warf. As they were trolling near the dam they lost power to the electric motor. Before they could correct the issue they were pulled into the dam's boil swamping and capsizing the boat. Both were wearing PFD's but the victim could not escape the boil. The operator made it to shore and was treated at the local hospital. It is unknown if the victim had any formal boating safety education.

8.	1 Fatality 11/28/2016	Allegheny River 11:15PM	Warren County Monday
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A 52 year old man from Warren, PA lost his life after his boat capsized sometime during the evening of November 28th. Indication is that the operator was attempting to put the vessel onto the trailer and was on the bow when the vessel capsized throwing him into the water. The water that evening was choppy with winds about 12-16 mph. The water temperature was 49F. Sudden cold-water emersion may have been a contributing factor. The victim was wearing a lifejacket but it is unknown if he had any formal boating safety education.

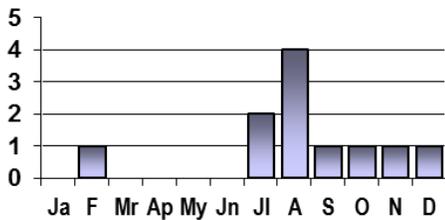
9.	1 Fatality 12/29/16	Susquehanna River 6:00 p.m.	Lancaster County Thursday
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A 65-year-old male was reported missing and later found deceased wearing his lifejacket. It is likely the victim launched his 12-foot kayak a day before onto the Conestoga River and paddled out into Susquehanna River where his kayak was found capsized. It is unknown where or when his kayak capsized but the victim was wearing a lifejacket. However, the victim was not dressed appropriately for the environmental conditions. The victim was an experience paddler with formal boating safety education. Sudden coldwater immersion and hypothermia where factors in this incident.

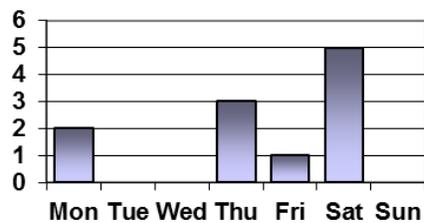
TOTALS FOR 2016: There were 70 reportable recreational boating accidents, 42 injuries requiring medical treatment, and 9 accidents resulting in 11 fatalities.

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

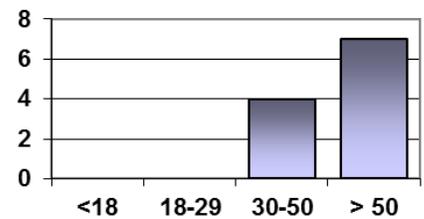
FATALITIES by MONTH



FATALITIES by DAY



FATALITIES by AGE



COLD WEATHER DATA

The chart below shows the number of accidents over the past 14 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.

