

In Summary

Water-related fatality rates in Ontario are highest for men 15-24 and those over 55.

Drownings are most likely to occur during the summer months in natural bodies of water such as lakes and rivers.

The highest proportion of incidents occur during a recreational activity, most commonly swimming, recreating near the water, or boating.

Despite the dip in Ontario drownings in 2011, the increased death rate demonstrated by the five-year average reinforces the need for continued strong drowning prevention efforts.

Acknowledgments

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- The Office of the Chief Coroner in Ontario which permitted and facilitated confidential access to coroners' reports on preventable water-related deaths.
- The volunteers who contributed their time and energy including data extraction on preventable water-related deaths from coroners' files.
- Tessa Clemens who was primary author and data analyst for this report and Lucie Simoes who provided data input and verification.

Research methodology

Complete data from 1995 - 2010

The water-related death data is extracted from the offices of Canada's Chief Coroners and Medical Examiners in each province/territory.

The scope of this research:

- collects the data needed to profile victims of aquatic incidents, including the circumstances and contributing factors under which these incidents occurred.

- includes all deaths in each provincial/territorial jurisdiction and Canada overall resulting from incidents "in, on or near" water; "near-water" incidents were included if the incident was closely related to water-based recreational, vocational or daily living activity, or if the presence of water appeared to be an attraction contributing to the incident.
- includes only preventable (unintentional) deaths, not deaths due to natural causes, suicide, or homicide.

Interim data

Complete final data on more recent drownings and other water-related deaths are not yet available from the offices of the provincial/territorial Chief Coroners and Medical Examiners. The interim, preliminary data are derived from media releases, media clippings, news reports and internet searches.

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Drowning Prevention Research Centre Canada

The Drowning Prevention Research Centre is the lead agency for drowning and water-incident research in Canada. The Centre conducts research into fatal and non-fatal drowning, significant aquatic injury and rescue interventions.

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The Lifesaving Society

The Lifesaving Society – Canada's lifeguarding experts – works to prevent drowning and water-related injury through its training programs, Water Smart® public education, aquatic safety management, drowning research and lifesaving sport. Annually, over 1,000,000 Canadians participate in the Society's swimming, lifesaving, lifeguard and leadership training programs. The Society sets the standard for aquatic safety in Canada and certifies Canada's National Lifeguards.

