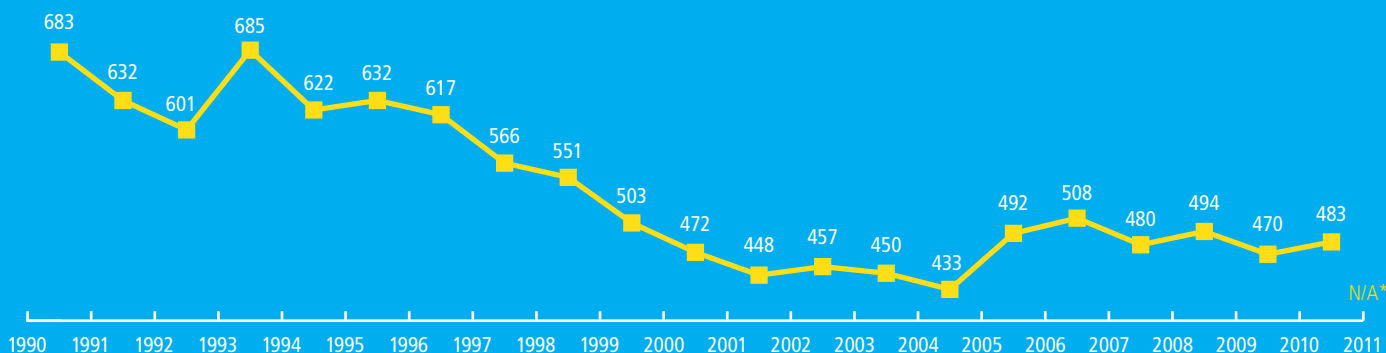


DROWNING REPORT

Prepared for the Lifesaving Society Canada by the Drowning Prevention Research Centre

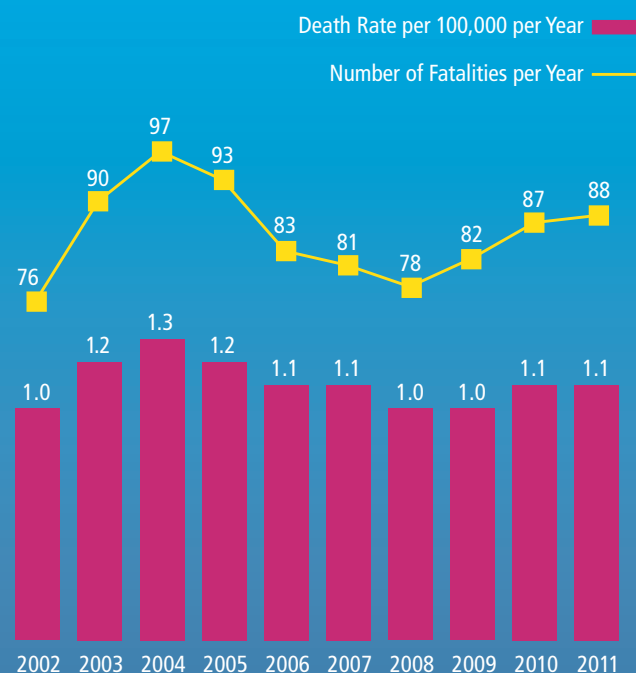
Canadian Totals 1990 - 2011



*National total unknown due to unavailability of 2011 Alberta data.

Between 2007 and 2011, 416 drownings occurred in Quebec waters. In these most recent Coroner's data collection years, the average drowning rate in Quebec decreased by 8%. The average water-related fatality rate for 2007-2011 was 1.1 per 100,000 population, down from 1.2 in the previous five-year period. When compared to historic national averages, the average drowning rate in Quebec is 27% lower than that of the Canadian population as a whole.

Quebec Water-Related Fatalities and Death Rates 2002-2011



Preliminary interim data

For drownings since 2011, only preliminary, interim data from media and internet reports are available. In Quebec these numbers indicate that at least 77 drownings occurred in 2012 and at least 57 occurred in 2013.

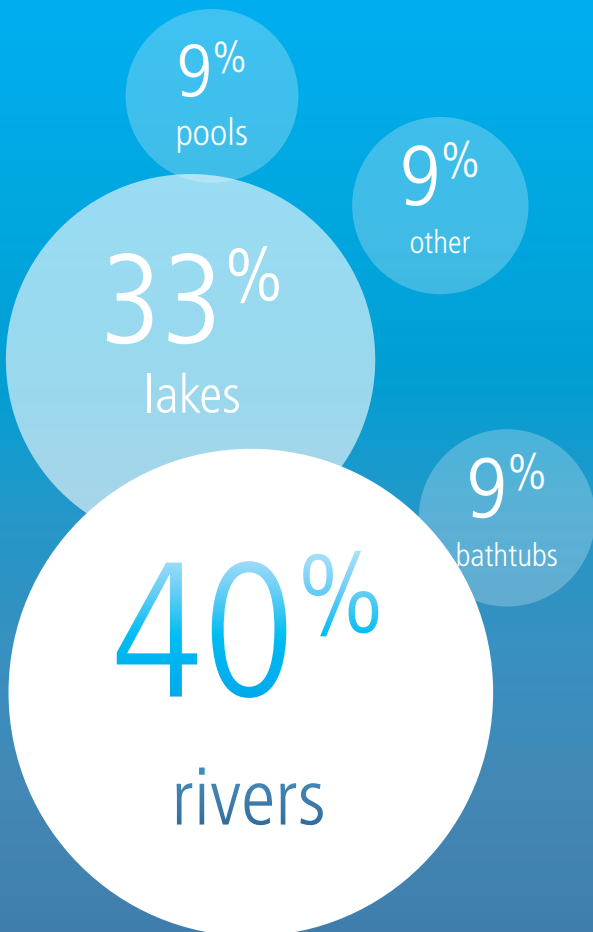
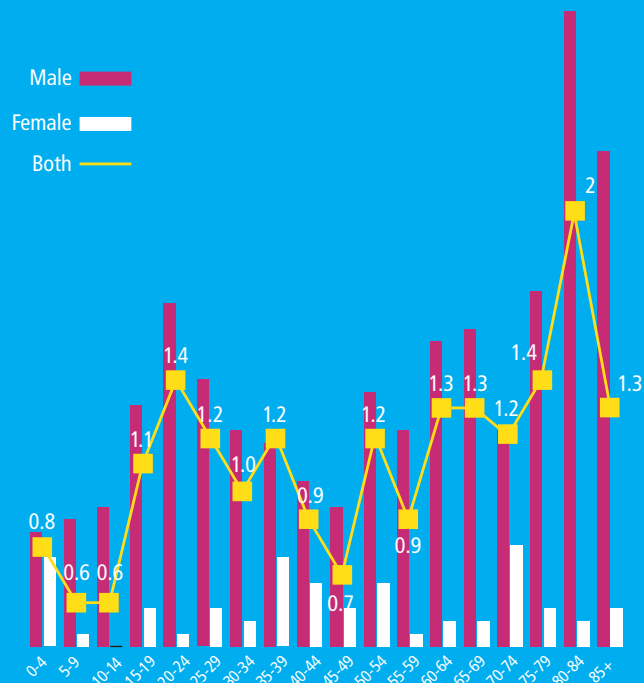
WHO is drowning?

The vast majority of drowning victims in Quebec are men, mirroring the trends in national statistics. In the 2007 to 2011 period, the average yearly water-related fatality rate for men in Quebec was 1.8 per 100,000 population compared to a rate of 0.3 for women.

Quebec drowning trends also closely reflect those of the national population when comparing death rates by age. The highest drowning rates are found among young adults aged 20-24 years and older adults over 60.

While not as high as Canadian numbers, fatality rates indicate that drowning in young children is also of concern in Quebec where 16 children under the age of 5 years lost their lives in a water-related incident between 2007 and 2011.

Death Rate by Age: Male vs. Female and Both Sexes, 2007-2011



WHERE are they drowning?

Three quarters (75%) of drownings in Quebec occur in natural bodies of water with the highest proportion occurring in flowing water such as rivers and streams (40%), followed by lakes (33%). Pools (9%) and bathtubs (9%) are the most common man-made setting for drownings in Quebec.

Private pools, which account for 8% of all drownings in Quebec, pose a concern especially in the under-five age group for whom they are the number one setting for drownings (50%).

Very few drownings occur in lifeguard supervised settings: in 2007-2011 less than 2% of all drownings in Quebec occurred in a lifeguard supervised setting.

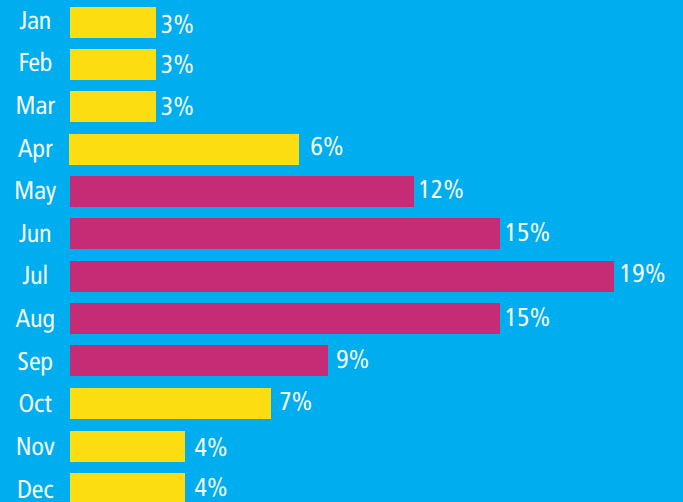
The vast majority (79%) of Quebec drownings occur in urban settings. This proportion is approximately 36% higher than historic national averages. About 81% of the Quebec population live in an urban area.

WHEN are they drowning?

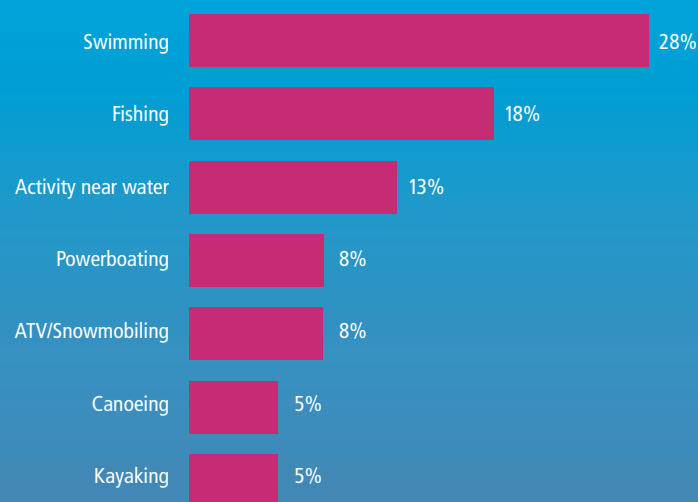
The majority of drownings in Quebec occur during the warmer months with over two thirds (69%) of water-related fatalities between 2007 and 2011 occurring in May through September. The greatest number of drownings occurred in July (19%).

Over half (53%) of Quebec drownings occur on weekends (Friday, Saturday or Sunday).

Victims by Time of Year



Victims by Most Common Recreational Activity



WHAT were they doing?

Two thirds (66%) of victims who drowned in Quebec between 2007 and 2011 were engaged in a recreational activity at the time of the incident. Among these, the most common primary recreational activities were swimming (28%), fishing (18%), and walking, running or playing near water (13%).

Daily living incidents account for the next highest proportion of incidents in Quebec (24%). The most common daily living activity was bathing (40%) followed closely by motor vehicle incidents (31%).

By type of activity, the greatest proportion of water-related fatalities occur during boating (27%), and aquatic incidents (26%). The majority of boating deaths are accounted for by powerboat use (43%) or canoeing (26%). 21% of victims were wearing a lifejacket when the boating incident occurred. While this proportion is higher than in many other provinces, in 38% of these instances the lifejacket was worn improperly.

Aquatic incidents (26%), where the victim intended to be in the water and something went wrong, occur almost as frequently as boating incidents in Quebec. These are largely accounted for by water-related fatalities that occur during recreational swimming.

Risk Factors

The major risk factors contributing to drowning incidents in Quebec are consistent with those the Lifesaving Society has identified for the national population in the past, however alcohol consumption appears to be less of a factor in Quebec than in other provinces.

Boating

Not wearing a PFD (73%)
Alcohol consumption (18%)
Boating alone (30%)
Boating in twilight or darkness (28%)
Capsized (41%)

Swimming

Alcohol consumption (20%)
Swimming alone or with minors only (35%)
Poor swimming ability (33%)

Age

< 5

Alone or with other minors only (69%), often because supervision was distracted

5-14

Alone or with other minors only (35%)
Twilight or after dark (22%)
Poor swimming ability (57%)

15-34

Alcohol consumption (26%)
Alone (37%)
Twilight or after dark (28%)
Not wearing PFD when relevant (74%)

35-64

Alcohol consumption (30%)
Twilight or after dark (27%)
Alone (44%)

65+

Alone (59%)
Not wearing PFD when relevant (73%)

In Summary

Water-related fatality rates in Quebec are highest for men and people aged 20-24 and over 60 years.

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

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

The average water-related fatality rate in Quebec is lower than that of the national population and has continued to decrease in recent years, reinforcing the value of continued strong drowning prevention efforts.

Research methodology

Complete data from 2007-2011

The drowning research process involves data collection; research tabulation and analysis. Water-related death data is extracted from the offices of Canada's Chief Coroners and Medical Examiners. 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 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.

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the support, co-operation and efforts of:

- The Office of the Coroner of Quebec which permitted and facilitated confidential access to 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.

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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.

Contact Barbara Byers, Research Director, Email: experts@drowningresearch.ca, Telephone: 416-490-8844.

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.



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