Boating Fatalities
Boating Fatalities photo detail

Cover Photos: (Courtesy of FWC)

On January 20, 2017 at approximately 6:00 pm, two vessels were operating on Lake Istokpoga in Highlands County. A Gambler bass boat collided with a 15-foot-Key Largo boat. The Gambler was heading east and the Key Largo was heading north, in the same general location. Both vessels were being operated toward one another approximately 1/4 mile from shore. The Gambler’s bow struck the Key Largo’s port beam and ramped up and over the port side of the Key Largo. The operator and occupant of the Key Largo were both struck by the Gambler resulting in blunt force trauma and were subsequently ejected. The Gambler crossed over top of the Key Largo. The operator and passenger of the Gambler were both ejected, resulting in minor injuries.
2017 FATALITY DATA

2016 FATALITIES - TOP TEN STATES

- Washington: 18
- Virginia: 19
- New York: 20
- South Carolina: 20
- North Carolina: 22
- Louisiana: 23
- Michigan: 33
- California: 43
- Texas: 48
- Florida: 59

*2017 statistics for top 10 states were not available at time of printing
Source: U.S. Coast Guard Boating Safety Division (recreational fatalities)

FLORIDA TOTAL FATALITIES RECORDED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Registered vessels</th>
<th>Fatality rate</th>
<th>Number of fatalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>944,162</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>931,450</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>915,713</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>899,635</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>896,632</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investigating Agency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheriff’s Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FWC 55 / 90%

*61 fatal accidents

*Fatality Rate – Number of fatalities per 100,000 registered vessels
2017 Fatality Data

Fatal Accidents by Month

Falls overboard 11
Other 5
Capsizing 4
Collision with vessel 3
Collision with fixed object 2
Flooding/swamping 2
Struck by skeg/prop 1
Struck underwater object 1

Time of Day

0:00-1:59 am 4
2:00-3:59 am 1
4:00-5:59 am 1
6:00-7:59 am 3
8:00-9:59 am 3
10:00-11:59 am 6
12:00-1:59 pm 5
2:00-3:59 pm 7
4:00-5:59 pm 10
6:00-7:59 pm 14
8:00-9:59 pm 5
10:00-11:59 pm 2

Accident Types

Falls overboard 25
Other 8
Capsizing 7
Collision with vessel 7
Collision with fixed object 7
Flooding/swamping 5
Struck by skeg/prop 1
Struck underwater object 1

*61 fatal accidents involving 67 fatalities (Based on first harmful event)
2017 Fatality Data

Operation at Time of Accident

- Launching/loading: 1
- Rowing/paddling: 2
- Docked/moored: 2
- Sailing: 2
- Changing speed: 3
- Other: 4
- At anchor: 4
- Changing direction: 5
- Drifting: 7
- Cruising: 42

*72 vessels involved in 61 fatal accidents with 67 victims

Accident Site Location

- Marsh/swamp: 1
- Inlet/pass: 5
- Canal/cut: 6
- Ocean/gulf: 9
- River/creek: 9
- Lake/pond: 14
- Bay/sound: 17

Restricted Area Fatal Accidents

- MPH limit: 1
- Idle speed: 2
- Slow speed: 4
- Other: 9

*16 of 61 fatal accidents occurred in restricted areas
Boating Accidents Statistical Report

2017 Fatality Data

Vessel Ownership

- Owned: 63 / 87%
- Rented: 2 / 3%
- Borrowed (not in household): 7 / 10%

*67 total fatalities involving 72 vessels

Vessel Fuel & Hull Type

- Gasoline: 61
- Electric: 1
- Diesel: 2
- None: 8
- Rigid hull inflatable: 1
- Not specified: 2
- Other: 5
- Aluminum: 7
- Fiberglass: 57

Vessel Propulsion, Length & Type

- Propeller: 49
- < 12 Feet: 17
- 12 - 16 Feet: 13
- 17 - 21 Feet: 23
- 22 - 26 Feet: 8
- 27 - 40 Feet: 9
- 41-65 Feet: 1
- 66+ Feet: 1

- Sail: 3
- Air Thrust: 3
- Manual: 7
- Water jet: 10
- Other: 2
- Sail (aux power): 2
- Rowboat (Jon): 2
- Canoe/kayak: 5
- Personal watercraft: 10
- Cabin motorboat: 5
- Open motorboat: 39
- Gasoline: 61
- Diesel: 2
- None: 8
- Rigid hull inflatable: 1
- Not specified: 2
- Other: 5
- Aluminum: 7
- Fiberglass: 57
2017 Fatality Data

Primary Cause of Death

- Trauma: 29 / 43%
- Drowning: 35 / 52%
- Other: 3 / 5%

*67 fatalities, “Other” category includes three missing where cause of death is unknown

Operator Gender

- Male: 69 / 96%
- Female: 3 / 4%

*72 operators

Operator Age (in years)

- 51 + years: 37 / 51%
- 36 - 50: 17 / 24%
- 22 - 35: 11 / 15%
- 17 - 21: 7 / 10%

Unknown: 7 / 10%

Operator Experience (in hours)

- Over 100: 48 / 67%
- 10 - 100: 11 / 15%
- Unknown: 7 / 10%
- Under 10: 6 / 8%
### 2017 Fatality Data

On October 15, 2017, a 17-foot-motorboat collided with a PWC on Lake Louise after sunset. The motorboat and the PWC approached each other as they rounded a bend in the shoreline. The operator of the motorboat was unaware of the PWC until they were very close. The motorboat took evasive action by making a hard right turn. The PWC appeared to turn to its left, which put them back on a collision course. The motorboat turned back left putting its vessel perpendicular to the PWC. The motorboat operator said it appeared as though the PWC was now headed back towards him so he accelerated to try and avoid collision. The PWC struck the motorboat on the starboard side. Both the operator and occupant of the PWC were ejected from the vessel. The PWC operator, a 38-year-old male, was later pronounced deceased at the hospital.

### Operator Education

- **Boater education**: 17 / 23%
- **No boater education**: 48 / 67%
- **No Info**: 7 / 10%

### Operators by Age Without Formal Boater Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17-21</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-35</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-50</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51+</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*48 operators did not have any formal boater education

### Victim Statistics

#### (Ejected)

- **Ejected**: 37 / 55%
- **Not ejected**: 30 / 45%

#### (Wearing PFD)

- **Wearing PFD**: 13 / 19%
- **Not wearing PFD**: 54 / 81%

#### (Swimming Ability)

- **Can swim**: 49 / 73%
- **Cannot swim**: 18 / 27%

*61 fatal accidents involving 67 victims*
**2017 Fatality Data**

**Victim Residency**
- Florida resident: 62 / 93%
- Non resident: 5 / 7%

**Victim Gender**
- Male: 60 / 90%
- Female: 7 / 10%

**Victim Age**
- Less than 17: 4 / 6%
- 17 - 21: 3 / 4%
- 22 - 35: 20 / 30%
- 36 - 50: 12 / 18%
- 51+: 28 / 42%

**Alcohol/Drug Related Accidents**
- Alcohol/drug use: 15 / 25%
- Other causes: 46 / 75%

**Alcohol/Drug Related Victims**
- Alcohol/drug use: 16 / 24%
- Other causes: 51 / 76%

*61 accidents involving 67 fatalities, three were swimmers
(Alcohol/drug related refers to any accidents in which alcohol or drug use may have been a contributing factor, whether or not legally impaired)
2017 Fatality Data

Primary Cause of Accident by Reviewing Authority

- Careless/reckless operation: 1
- Operator inexperience: 1
- Machinery failure: 1
- Hull failure: 1
- Hazardous water: 1
- Excessive speed: 1
- Violation of navigation rule: 2
- Standing/sitting on gunwale, bow or transom: 2
- Weather: 3
- Drug use: 3
- Skier or occupant behavior: 4
- No proper look-out/inattention: 5
- Sharp turn: 7
- Alcohol use: 12
- Other: 17

*61 fatal accidents

State Waters vs. Offshore Waters

- State: 59 / 97%
- Offshore: 2 / 3%

*Offshore defined as the edge of the Gulf Stream or three miles from shore, whichever is greater, in the Atlantic and more than nine miles out in the Gulf