Boating Fatalities
Boating Fatalities photo detail

Cover Photos: (Courtesy of FWC)

Three men were fishing from a 17 foot bass boat on Lake Talquin in Leon County. After relocating to an area on the lake known as the Iron Curtain, one of the men noticed the vessel had taken on water. The operator attempted to start the engine while the other two men reeled in their lines. The vessel capsized before the engine started and all three subjects fell overboard. One of the men, 49 years of age, swam to a nearby piece of land. The other two men were unable to swim and attempted to climb on top of the overturned vessel. The splashing and calls for help were heard by a boater loading his vessel at a nearby boat ramp. He was able to locate and rescue the man on shore. However, the other two men could not be located. A rescue dive team recovered the bodies of the two men, ages 38 and 49 the following day. PFD’s were onboard the vessel at the time of the accident, although none had been worn.
2015 Fatality Data

2014 Fatalities - Top Ten States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number of Fatalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2015 statistics for top 10 states were not available at time of printing
Source: U.S. Coast Guard Division of Auxiliary and Boating Safety (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>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>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>901,969</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>922,491</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Investigating Agency

Sheriff’s Office: 1 / 2%
Police: 1 / 2%
FWC: 50 / 96%

*52 fatal accidents

*Fatality Rate – Number of fatalities per 100,000 registered vessels
**2015 Fatality Data**

**Fatal Accidents by Month**

- January: 4
- February: 3
- March: 4
- April: 4
- May: 2
- June: 5
- July: 5
- August: 6
- September: 8
- October: 3
- November: 3
- December: 8

*52 fatal accidents involving 55 fatalities
Fatality data includes six missing persons where their disappearance is associated with a boating accident.

**Time of Day**

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

**Accident Types**

- Falls overboard: 22
- Flooding (swamping): 11
- Collision with fixed object: 7
- Capsizing: 5
- Collision with vessel: 2
- Fall in boat: 2
- Other: 2
- Grounding: 1

*52 fatal accidents involving 55 fatalities (Based on first harmful event.)
2015 Fatality Data

Operation at Time of Accident

- Docking/undocking: 1
- Changing direction: 1
- Being towed: 1
- Other: 2
- Changing speed: 5
- At anchor: 6
- Drifting: 7
- Rowing/paddling: 8
- Cruising: 25

*56 vessels involved in 52 fatal accidents with 55 victims

Accident Site Location

- Port/harbor: 1
- Inlet/pass: 2
- Canal/cut: 5
- Bay/sound: 10
- River/creek: 11
- Lake/pond: 11
- Ocean/gulf: 12

Restricted Area Fatal Accidents

- Manatee slow speed: 1
- Idle speed: 1
- Slow speed: 2
- MPH limit: 2
- Other: 3

*9 of 52 fatal accidents occurred in restricted areas
2015 Fatality Data

Vessel Ownership

- Owned: 41 / 73%
- Rented: 5 / 9%
- Borrowed (not in household): 10 / 18%

Vessel Fuel & Hull Type

- Gasoline: 42
- None: 10
- Diesel: 3
- Electric: 1
- Steel: 1
- Rubber/vinyl: 1
- Wood: 2
- Other: 3
- Aluminum: 9
- Fiberglass: 40

Vessel Propulsion, Length & Type

- Propeller: 39
- Sail: 2
- Manual: 10
- Water jet: 4
- Air Thrust: 1

- < 12 Feet: 8
- 12 - 16 Feet: 17
- 17 - 21 Feet: 18
- 22 - 26 Feet: 6
- 27 - 40 Feet: 4
- 41 - 65 Feet: 2
- 66 + Feet: 1

- Jon boat: 1
- Pontoon: 1
- Airboat: 1
- Other: 2
- Sail (only): 2
- Personal watercraft: 4
- Cabin motorboat: 5
- Canoe/kayak: 8
- Open motorboat: 32

*55 total fatalities involving 56 vessels

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2015 Fatality Data

Primary Cause of Death

- Drowning: 35 / 64%
- Trauma: 11 / 20%
- Other: 9 / 16%

*55 fatalities, “Other” category includes 6 missing where cause of death is unknown

Operator Gender

- Male: 54 / 95%
- Female: 3 / 5%

*57 operators

Operator Age

- Less than 17: 1 / 2%
- 17 - 21: 4 / 7%
- 22 - 35: 14 / 24%
- 36 - 50: 16 / 28%
- 51 + years: 22 / 39%

Operator Experience (in hours)

- Unknown: 4 / 7%
- Under 10: 7 / 12%
- 10 - 100: 11 / 19%
- Over 100: 35 / 62%

*55 fatalities, Other category includes 6 missing where cause of death is unknown
2015 Fatality Data

Glades County 2/19/15: A man and woman were in a 20 foot open motor boat on Lake Okeechobee. Approximately two miles from Indian Prairie, the male operator slowed the vessel and turned around due to the rough conditions. Waves began pouring over the stern and the vessel quickly submerged. The two did not have PFDs on and were heavily clothed. The male became exhausted and slipped below the surface. The female was able to hold onto some floating debris and was rescued a few hours later. The body of the operator was located three days later.

Operator Education

- No boater education: 41 / 72%
- Boater education: 16 / 28%

Operators by Age Without Formal Boater Education

- 17-21: 2
- 22-35: 10
- 36-50: 12
- 51+: 17

*41 operators did not have any formal boater education

Victim Statistics (Ejected)

- Ejected: 32 / 58%
- Not ejected: 23 / 42%

Victim Statistics (Wearing PFD)

- Wearing PFD: 7 / 13%
- Not wearing PFD: 48 / 87%

Victim Statistics (Swimming Ability)

- Can swim: 30 / 55%
- Cannot swim: 25 / 45%

*52 fatal accidents involving 55 victims
2015 Fatality Data

Victim Residency

- Florida resident: 50 / 91%
- Non resident: 5 / 9%

Victim Gender

- Male: 52 / 95%
- Female: 3 / 5%

Victim Age

- Less than 17: 6 / 11%
- 17 - 21: 5 / 9%
- 22 - 35: 11 / 20%
- 36 - 50: 11 / 20%
- 51+: 22 / 40%

Alcohol/Drug Related Accidents

- Alcohol/drug use: 10 / 19%
- Other causes: 42 / 81%

Alcohol/Drug Related Victims

- Alcohol/drug use: 11 / 20%
- Other causes: 44 / 80%

*52 accidents involving 55 fatalities
(Acohol/drug related refers to any accidents in which alcohol or drug use may have been a contributing factor, whether or not legally impaired.)
2015 Fatality Data

Primary Cause of Accident by Reviewing Authority

- Skier or occupant behavior: 1
- Machinery failure: 1
- Improper anchoring: 1
- Hull failure: 1
- Drug use: 1
- Careless/reckless: 1
- Sharp turn: 2
- Standing/sitting on gunwale, bow or transom: 2
- Overloading: 2
- Excessive speed: 3
- No proper look-out/inattention: 4
- Weather: 4
- Operator inexperience: 7
- Alcohol use: 10
- Other: 12

*52 fatal accidents

State Waters vs. Offshore Waters

- State: 47 / 90%
- Offshore: 5 / 10%

*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.