

Drowning

People in the NWT are six times more likely to drown than other Canadians. During the 1990s 37 NWT residents drowned.

Almost half of the people who drowned fell out of a boat. About 20% drowned after falling into the water through ice or from the shore. Others died while swimming. During the 1990s there were four drowning deaths when snowmobiles broke through the ice.

Almost all people who drowned were men. Males between 25 and 34 years old are at highest risk and are most likely to drown in boating accidents.

How can I stay safe near water?

- **Be very careful while boating.** It's best to not fall into the water at all. Cold water affects your muscles and makes it hard to hold onto anything. It also makes it hard to control your breathing and you could breathe in water.
- **Wear a life jacket or PFD.** They keep your head above water if you fall in. Remember to wear them every time you go boating. It's not good enough to have them in the boat with you - you will not be able to reach them even if you think they're nearby. Everyone in the boat needs their own life jacket.
- **Never drink and drive.** The rules are the same on the water as on the road. Don't get in a boat with a person who has been drinking. Don't go swimming if you've been drinking, either.
- **Keep an eye on your kids.** An adult should always be watching kids while they play in or near the water. Children can easily slip and fall into the water, or break through thin ice.

