Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

2012 Recreational Boating Incident Summary
Two men fishing on a private pond in the afternoon. The weather was clear and the water was calm. One of the men was a non-swimmer and did not wear a life jacket. Around sunset, one of the men fell into the water while trying to capsize the boat. They both drown. The boat was an open motorboat with an inexperienced captain. Alcohol use was apparent and there was no life jacket available. The men were both experienced fisherman but not used to open water and large fires. The capsize occurred in James River, after a large fire erupted, engulfing the boat in flames. No life jackets were worn. Weather was cloudy and the boat was a pontoon boat. A 37-year-old man and a 56-year-old man drowned without wearing life jackets.
Reportable Incidents

Incidents that are required to be reported to the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

- Damage over $2,000 by or to the vessel or its equipment
- Injury requiring medical aid beyond first aid
- Loss of life
- Disappearance of any person from a vessel
2012 Virginia Boating Incident Summary*

- Number of Incidents = 95
- Number of Vessels Involved = 111
- Number of Injuries = 62
- Number of Fatalities = 14
  - 86% of fatalities were due to drowning associated with not wearing a life jacket
  - Alcohol was a known factor in 7% of fatal incidents
- Property Damage = $ 476,584

*Reported to DGIF
Boating in Virginia

- # of River Miles – 52,225 miles (source VDEQ)
- Coastline – 132 miles (source VIMS)
- Tidal Shore – 7,213 (source VIMS)
- Inland Lakes – 116,364 acres (source VDEQ)
## 10 Year Boat Incident Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Incidents</th>
<th>Number of Injuries</th>
<th>Number of Fatalities</th>
<th>Amount of Property Damage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>$1,054,410.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>98</td>
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<td>$1,209,015.00</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>89</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>$1,151,958.00</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>$1,001,170.00</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>$387,668.00</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>$907,900.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>$1,898,499.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>$1,226,360.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>$476,584.00</td>
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</table>
10 Year Boating Incident Statistics
2003 - 2012

Number of Incidents

Number of Fatalities

0       20     20     20     20     20     20     20     20     20
10      40     40     40     40     40     40     40     40     40
20      60     60     60     60     60     60     60     60     60
30      80     80     80     80     80     80     80     80     80
40      100    100    100    100    100    100    100    100    100
50      120    120    120    120    120    120    120    120    120
60      140    140    140    140    140    140    140    140    140
70
80
90
100
110
120
130
140
150
160
Recreational Vessels Registered in Virginia by Year
1992 - 2012
Annual Recreational Boating Incident Rate
1992 – 2012 (per 100,000 Registered Boats)
Fatalities, Injuries, and Incidents by Year
1992 - 2012

- Tougher PWC laws passed in 1998
- Mandatory Education Law Passed, Phase in started in 2009

Graph showing trends in incidents, injuries, and fatalities from 1992 to 2012 with notable legal changes in 1998 and 2009.
2012 Boating Incidents and Fatalities By Month

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Incidents</th>
<th>Fatalities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2012 Percentage of Incidents in Each Month that were Fatal

- Jan: 0%
- Feb: 0%
- Mar: 0%
- Apr: 17%
- May: 7%
- Jun: 14%
- Jul: 12%
- Aug: 25%
- Sept: 60%
- Oct: 14%
- Nov: 0%
- Dec: 0%
- 2012 Boating Incidents and Fatalities By Day of Week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day of Week</th>
<th>Incidents</th>
<th>Fatalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>
2012 Boating Incidents and Fatalities by Time of Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Incidents</th>
<th>Fatalities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:01 am - 10:00 am</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:01 am - 12:00 pm</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:01 pm - 2:00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:01 pm - 4:00 pm</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:01 pm - 6:00 pm</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:01 pm - 8:00 pm</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:01 pm - 10:00 pm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:01 pm - 12:00 am</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:01 am - 2:00 am</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:01 am - 4:00 am</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:01 am - 6:00 am</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2012 Boating Incidents and Fatalities by Vessel Type

- **Open Motorboat**: 57 incidents, 6 fatalities
- **Cabin Motorboat**: 15 incidents, 2 fatalities
- **Pontoon**: 10 incidents, 2 fatalities
- **Personal Water Craft**: 9 incidents, 1 fatality
- **Auxiliary Sail**: 6 incidents, 1 fatigue
- **Canoe/Kayak**: 3 incidents, 1 fatality
- **Sail (only)**: 2 incidents, 2 fatalities
- **Commercial Vessel (Tug)**: 1 incident, 1 fatality
- **Rowboat**: 1 incident, 1 fatality
2012 Boating Incidents and Fatalities
By Water Body Type

- **Lake**: 38 incidents, 4 fatalities
- **River**: 31 incidents, 5 fatalities
- **Bay**: 18 incidents, 2 fatalities
- **Ocean**: 4 incidents, 0 fatalities
- **Private Pond**: 3 incidents, 3 fatalities
2012 Boating Incidents and Fatalities
Top Locations of Incidents

- Smith Mountain Lake: 17 incidents, 2 fatalities
- James River: 12 incidents, 2 fatalities
- Chesapeake Bay: 12 incidents, 2 fatalities
- Lake Anna: 8 incidents, 1 fatality
- Rappahannock River: 4 incidents, 1 fatality
- Lake Chesdin: 4 incidents
- Buggs Island Lake: 4 incidents, 1 fatality
- Atlantic Ocean: 3 incidents
- Private Pond: 3 incidents

Legend:
- Blue: Incidents
- Red: Fatalities
2012 Boating Incidents and Fatalities
Top Primary Incident Types

- Capsizing
- Falls Overboard
- Skier Mishap
- Collision with Vessel
- Collision with Fixed Object
- Grounding
- Fire or Explosion (Fuel)
- Flooding
- Sinking
- OTHER-SWIMMER DROWNING

One incident resulted in a double fatality
2012 Boating Incidents and Fatalities
Top Primary Contributing Factor

- Passenger or Skier Behavior
- Fault of Equipment
- Operator Inattention
- Careless/Reckless Operation
- Weather
- Fault of Hull
- Operator Inexperience
- Unknown
- Congested Waters
- Alcohol Use
- Sharp Turn
- Excessive Speed
- Hazardous Waters
- Failure to Vent

Incidents
Fatalities
2012 Boating Incidents and Fatalities
By Vessel Size

- **Incidents**
  - Less Than 16'
  - 16' to < 26'
  - 26' to < 40'
  - 40' to < 65'

- **Fatalities**
  - Less Than 16'
  - 16' to < 26'
  - 26' to < 40'
  - 40' to < 65'
2012 Boat Incidents
Age of Operators

Under 18 | 18 - 25 | 26 - 35 | 36 - 55 | Over 55 | Unknown
2012 Boat Incidents
Education of Operators

![Bar chart showing the education status of boat operators in 2012. The categories are:
- Does Not Meet Education Requirement
- Meets Education Requirement but Non-NASBLA Approved
- Unknown
- None
- NASBLA Approved

The chart indicates the number of incidents for each category. The most incidents were in the 'None' category, followed by 'NASBLA Approved'. The least incidents were in the 'Does Not Meet Education Requirement' category.]
2012 Boating Incidents
Top Vessel Operation at Time of Incident

Cruising
Towed Sports
Fishing
Drifting
Leaving Dock
Maneuvering
At Anchor
Approaching Dock
Starting Engine
2012 Boating Incidents
Top PWC Incidents Types

- Collision with Vessel
- Falls Overboard
- OTHER-COLLISION W/PERSON IN WATER
- Capsizing
2012 Boating Incidents
Top Primary Contributing Factor of PWC Incidents

- Operator Inattention
- OTHER-SHARP TURN
- OTHER-WAVE WAKE
- Passenger or Skier Behavior
- Operator Inexperience
- Excessive Speed
- OTHER-CARELESS/RECKLESS OPERATION
2012 Boating Fatalities - by Vessel Type

- Auxiliary Sail: 2
- Cabin Motorboat: 2
- CANOE/KAYAK: 1
- Open Motorboat: 6
- PONTOON: 1
- Rowboat: 1
2012 Boating Fatalities by Location

- Bay: 4
- Lake: 4
- Private Pond: 4
- River: 2
2012 Boating Fatalities - Alcohol Use

- Unknown
- No (9)
- Yes (2)
2012 Boating Fatalities
Usage of Life Jackets

- Life Jacket Was Worn
- Not Worn and Not Used
- Unknown
2012 Boating Fatalities - Cause of Death

- Drowning: 12
- Blunt Force Trauma: 2
2012 Boating Fatalities
Vessel Activity

2012 Boating Fatalities
Cause of Fatal Accident
4/14/2012 – At 4:00 pm, two males were fishing on the James River from a 14’ Jon boat. One passenger was standing up at the bow of the boat pulling up the boat’s anchor when another vessel’s wake rocked the boat. This wake along with the weight of the passengers on one side of the boat caused it to capsize. One passenger, a 62 year old male, held onto the side of the boat briefly before letting go and drifting downstream where he subsequently drowned. Life jackets were onboard the vessel but not used. The weather was clear with moderate winds, air temperature 76 degrees and water temperature was 50 degrees.

5/18/2012 – A fisherman did not return home on 5/18 as expected by his family. His 16’ aluminum boat with a 9 hp engine was found in the New River and his body was found about 300 yards downstream. Two life jackets were on the boat, but neither were used. The 51 year old drowned. The weather was cloudy with light wind, air temperature was 74 degrees and water temperature was 71 degrees.
6/10/2012 – Two men were fishing on a private pond on an unpowered 10’ Jon boat in Caroline County around 10:45 am. One of the passengers, a 25 year old, fell into the water and drowned. He was a non-swimmer and was not wearing a life jacket and no life jackets were onboard. The weather was clear with no wind, air temperature was 90 degrees and water temperature was 70 degrees.

6/26/2012 – Two males where fishing in a 12’ Jon boat on a private pond in Amherst County at 9:00 pm. While they were gathering their gear, the weight in the boat shifted causing the boat to capsize. The operator swam to a nearby cement pillar. The 56 year old passenger was unable to swim to the pillar or the shore and drowned. No life jackets were onboard the vessel.
2012 Boating Fatality Summary – Virginia

- 7/7/2012 – Eight people were aboard a 20’ open motorboat around 8:00 pm on the James River near the Dutch Gap boat ramp. After only a few minutes into their voyage, someone smelled smoke. The engine was shut off and the cowling was lifted which caused a large fire to erupt and engulf the boat in flames. All passengers abandoned the ship. One passenger treaded water for about 25 minutes, but then was unable to stay afloat and drowned. The boat was burned to the waterline, two other passengers were injured. There were 9 life jackets onboard and 4 were used. The weather was clear with light winds, air temperature was 96 degrees and water temperature was 95 degrees.

- 7/13/2012 – At 10:15 pm, two males were entering the west channel to Tangier Island in the Chesapeake Bay. Their 25’ cabin motorboat hit channel marker 1, which was malfunctioning. The 37 year old passenger hit the cabin dash and died from blunt force trauma. The 51 year old operator was injured as well. The weather was clear with light winds, air temperature 85 degrees and water temperature 84 degrees.
7/21/2012 – At 7:50 pm, a 19’ jet drive open motorboat was pulling 2 juveniles on a tube on a private pond in Prince George County. When the driver turned to the left, the tube was propelled into a tree on the shoreline. One child was injured and the other 10 year old boy died due to blunt force trauma. The weather was cloudy with light winds, air temperature was 85 degrees and water temperature was 85 degrees.

8/4/2012 – Five people were fishing and swimming from an 18’ pontoon boat at Lake Anna. At 7:45 pm, one of the individuals was missing and he was unable to be located. The operator returned to the marina to get help to locate the individual. The 36 year old male was found in the vicinity of the boat’s last location and had drowned. He was not wearing a life jacket and alcohol use was apparent. The weather was clear with light winds, air temperature was 80 degrees and water temperature was 86 degrees.
2012 Boating Fatality Summary – Virginia

8/9/2012 – A 20’ rental pontoon (North Carolina registration) with 12 people on board departed from North Bend Campground on Buggs Island Lake about 3:30 pm. The vessel stopped to allow passengers to swim. One of the passengers, a 13 year old male, non-swimmer, went under the water and did not resurface. 11 Type II and 1 type IV life jackets were on board the vessel rated for 9 people. The weather was clear with strong winds, air temperature was 85 degrees and water temperature was 83 degrees.

8/22/2012 – An 18’7” open motorboat was found operating in a circular fashion without an operator on the Rappahannock River around 10:52 am. The 37 year old male apparently fell overboard. He was not wearing a life jacket. Weather was foggy with light wind, air temperature was 81 degrees and water temperature was 79 degrees.
9/9/2012 – Two men were on a 16’ open motorboat on Smith Mountain Lake at 1:15 pm. The 18 year old male decided to go swimming and immediately began to struggle in the deep water. The boat operator jumped in to assist the 18 year old, and went under water as well. Both men were non-swimmers. Life jackets were not worn. Weather was cloudy with light winds, water temperature was 78 degrees and air temperature was 75 degrees.

9/24/2012 – A 56 year old male was fishing from a kayak at Pohick Regional Park. The kayak capsized about 150 yards from the gravel boat landing. Witnesses saw his attempting to swim to shore but then he yelled for help, went under water and did not resurface. Life jackets were not worn. Weather was clear with light winds, air temperature 78 degrees and water temperature 72 degrees.