



# NORTHWEST TERRITORIES DROWNING REPORT



## Overview of 2012 AND 2013 CORONER DATA

The 2012 and 2013 data outlined in this report is the most recent data collected from the Office of the Chief Coroner in the Northwest Territories.

The Northwest Territories contains many lakes and waterways; the utilization of watercraft is an essential part of the northern lifestyle. With so many daily activities taking place in, on, and around the water, drownings and water-related injuries are prevalent in the Northwest Territories.

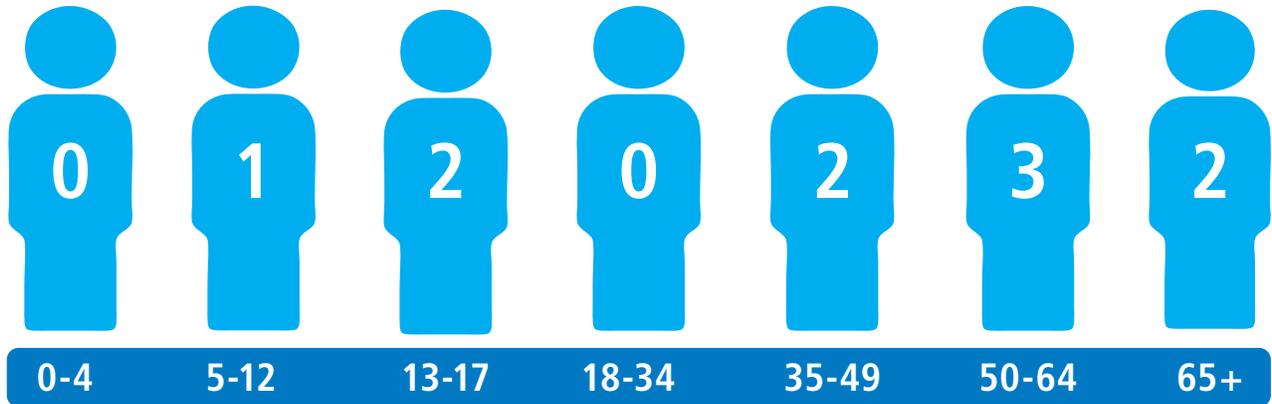
- 10 individuals drowned in the NWT in 2012 and 2013
- The majority of those who drowned in 2012 and 2013 were adults over 35 years of age
- 80% of all drowning victims were male
- 100% of water-related deaths occurred in natural bodies of water (rivers and lakes)
- Summer months (May – September) accounted for 80% of drownings
- The three main risk factors related to drowning incidents in the Northwest Territories were; not wearing a lifejacket, boating or swimming alone, and alcohol and/or drugs

## Overview of 2014 AND 2015 PRELIMINARY DATA

For drownings since 2013, only preliminary, interim data from media and internet reports are available.

- 5 individuals drowned in the NWT in 2014 and 2015
- The majority of those who drowned in 2014 and 2015 were adults over 35 years of age
- All drowning victims were male
- All drowning incidents occurred while boating on a river
- 80% of drownings occurred in September
- The main three risk factors related to drowning incidents in the Northwest Territories were; capsizing, boating alone, and not wearing a lifejacket





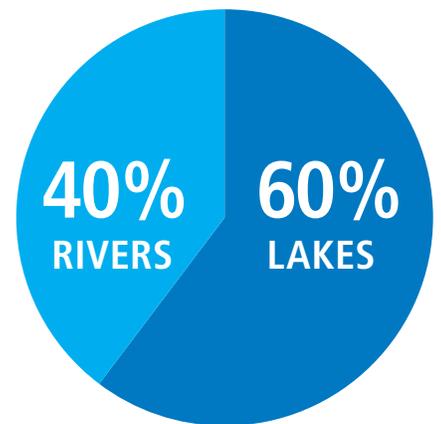
## WHO IS DROWNING

In 2012 and 2013, ten individuals drowned in the Northwest Territories. The vast majority of drowning victims continue to be men (8 out of 10). The majority (70%) of those who drowned were adults over 35 years of age.



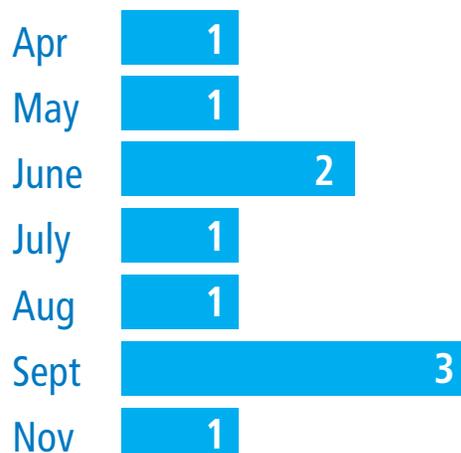
## WHERE ARE THEY DROWNING

All water-related deaths in the Northwest Territories occurred in natural bodies of water. Lakes claimed the greatest number of lives (60%) followed by rivers and streams (40%).



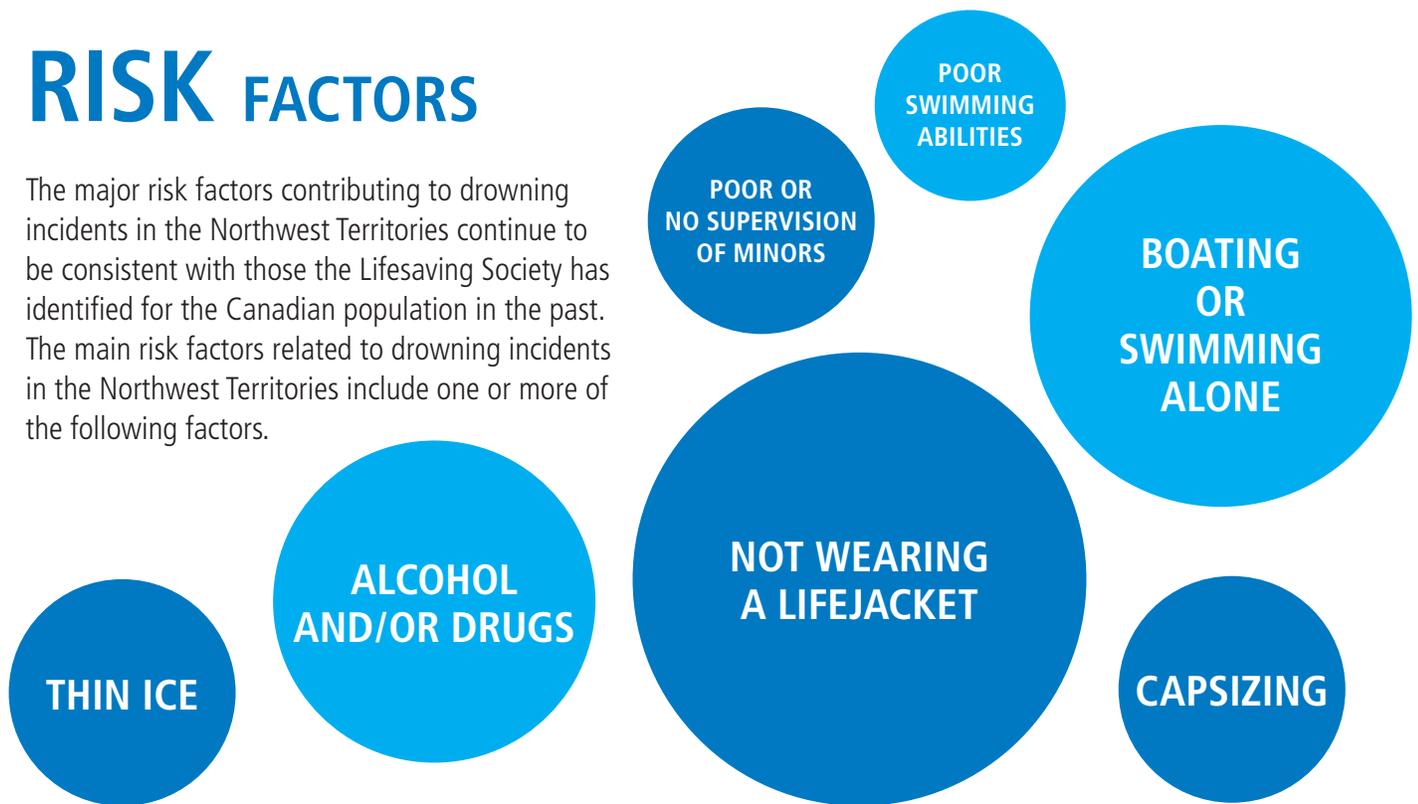
## WHEN ARE THEY DROWNING

By time of year, the warmer months still account for the greatest percentage of drowning deaths in the Northwest Territories. Over two thirds (80%) of water-related fatalities in 2012 and 2013 occurred in May through September. The highest number of drowning deaths occurred in September (30%).



# RISK FACTORS

The major risk factors contributing to drowning incidents in the Northwest Territories continue to be consistent with those the Lifesaving Society has identified for the Canadian population in the past. The main risk factors related to drowning incidents in the Northwest Territories include one or more of the following factors.



## WHAT WERE THEY DOING

By purpose of activity, recreational activities continue to account for the majority of drownings in the Northwest Territories. Boating accounted for the primary recreational activity (60%) followed by Non-Aquatic Activity (20%). Non-Aquatic Activity includes victims who did not intend to be in the water (i.e. fell into the water).

Boating includes activities where victims intended to be in the boat as well as being towed by a boat. Aquatic Activity includes victims who were in the water and intended to be there. Land, ice or air transportation includes victims who were in or on a vehicle such as a bike, car, aircraft, quad or snowmobile.



Boating 6



Non-Aquatic Activity 2



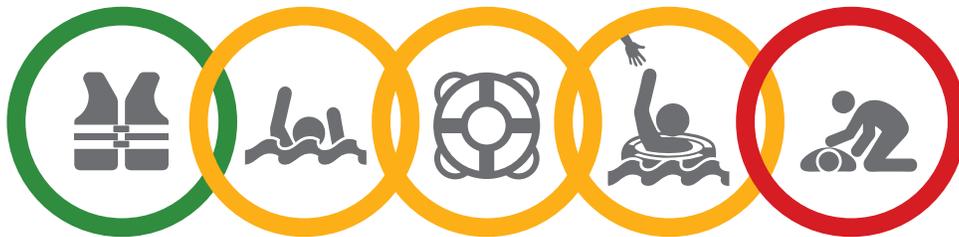
Transportation 1



Aquatic Activity 1



# DROWNING CHAIN OF SURVIVAL



**PREVENT DROWNING**  
Be safe in and around water

**RECOGNIZE DISTRESS**  
Ask someone to call for help

**PROVIDE FLOTATION**  
To prevent submersion

**REMOVE FROM WATER**  
Only if safe to do so

**PROVIDE CARE AS NEEDED**  
Seek medical attention

**PREVENTION**

**RECOGNITION, RESPONSE, AND RESCUE**

**TREATMENT**

In Canada, Swim to Survive® is a proven method to prevent drowning. Swim to Survive® teaches people the necessary skills to survive an unexpected fall into the water. Swim and survival skills are as easy as 1-2-3; Roll into Deep Water; Tread 1 Minute; Swim 50 Meters.

The Lifesaving Society advocates for all ages to learn basic swim to survive skills in a global effort to eliminate drowning. Survival swimming is a landmark initiative for the Royal Life Saving Society Commonwealth 125th Anniversary in 2016.

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 1,200,000 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.

## Acknowledgments

We greatly acknowledge the support, cooperation and efforts of the Office of the Chief Coroner in the Northwest Territories and the Drowning Prevention Research Centre Canada.

## Lifesaving Society Alberta and Northwest Territories

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