

Marine incidents in Queensland—2009



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Foreword

The report, *Marine incidents in Queensland*, is an important tool for furthering our understanding of emerging marine safety trends and challenges, and circulating the marine safety message to the boating community.

2009 turned out to be a challenging year for marine safety in Queensland.

The year was marred by a record number of marine incident-related fatalities.

Although the number of reported marine incidents was in line with previous years, the incidents were more critical.

By year's end, 20 people had died as the result of a marine incident—12 more than in the previous year of record low fatalities.

One-third of the fatalities were associated with extreme weather events in the first quarter of the year—no such incidents had been recorded the previous year.

Further, just over half the deaths in 2009 occurred in multiple fatality incidents. There were no multiple fatalities in 2008.

These two factors in concert pushed the 2009 fatality toll well above Queensland's annual average.

The 2009 report features an analysis of the year's fatal injuries that is specifically designed to identify any patterns that could be addressed to reduce the toll in the future.

That analysis importantly concludes that only one fatality in 2009 could rightly be deemed a sheer mishap: there was much that was foreseeable and avoidable in the remainder.

Maritime Safety Queensland will continue its work of encouraging and fostering safety as a core value and culture, but of course cannot alone ensure the safety of Queensland's boating community.

A collaborative approach is necessary. The boating community, industry and government must work together to ensure that boating can safely meet Queenslanders' varied needs for maritime transport, commerce, tourism and recreation.

Dave Stewart
Director-General
Department of Transport and Main Roads

Key points

- In 2009, 768 marine incidents were reported in Queensland or put differently, there were 321 marine incidents per 100 000 registered vessels.
- Fifty-one per cent of the vessels involved in marine incidents were being used recreationally, 43 per cent commercially and 6 per cent were used in a hire and drive setting.
- The most commonly occurring types of incident were collisions (30%), capsizing incidents (19%), and groundings (18%).
- Approximately 1 in 20 reported incidents were either a fatal or serious injury incident.
- There were 14 fatal marine incidents in 2009 resulting in 20 deaths: that is, 8.4 fatal injuries for every 100 000 registered vessels.
- The consequences of capsizing and person overboard incidents were disproportionate and severe: 187 capsizing and person overboard incidents led to 14 fatal injuries and 4 serious injuries.
- Alcohol and/or illegal drugs were involved in six deaths in four separate marine incidents.
- Twelve of those who died in 2009 were fishing or were on a fishing trip.
- Of the 14 fatal incidents that occurred in 2009, 31 persons ended up in the water and 19 died.