

Drowning in Vermont – Data Brief

The Statewide Incident Reporting Network

Background

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that drowning is the fifth leading cause of unintentional injury death for people of all ages in the United States, and the second leading cause of injury death for children ages 1 to 14 years.¹ For every one child who dies from drowning, another five receive emergency department care for nonfatal submersion injuries. Nonfatal drowning injuries can cause severe brain damage that may result in long-term disabilities such as memory problems and learning disabilities.²

This data brief describes characteristics of drowning-related incidents that resulted in Emergency Medical Services (EMS) activation in Vermont. Information was gathered from the Statewide Incident Reporting Network (SIREN), Vermont’s pre-hospital electronic documentation database. For more information about SIREN, including its strengths and limitations, please see the “What is SIREN?” document on the Health Department website.³

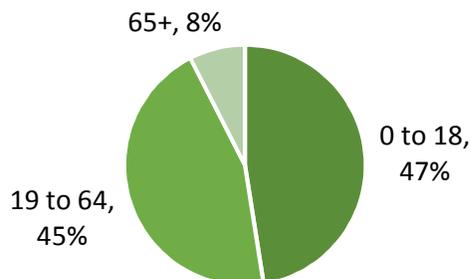
SIREN Data, January 1, 2015 – July 12, 2017

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) were activated 40 times over this two-and-a-half-year period for drowning or near drowning incidents. 80% of these calls resulted in treatment or transport by EMS.

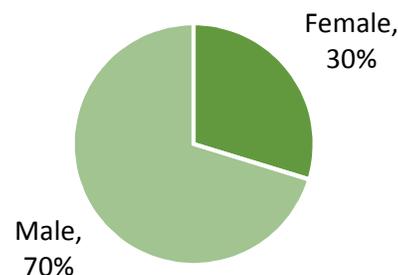
48% of these incidents occurred in a natural body of water, such as a river or lake, while 35% occurred at a swimming pool or private residence. The remaining 17% occurred in a variety of locations, such as quarries, or unspecified locations.

23% of these calls were to locations in Chittenden county, 18% were to locations in Rutland county, and the remaining were divided approximately equally among the other Vermont counties.

Drowning-related EMS Calls by Age Group



Drowning-related EMS Calls by Gender



In Vermont, almost all drowning-related EMS calls involved individuals under the age of 65. The proportions occurring between those ages 0 to 18 and those ages 19 to 64 were approximately equal. Drowning-related EMS calls in Vermont involved males twice as often as they involved females.

For more information regarding SIREN data, please contact Lauren Prinzing, MPH at: lauren.prinzing@vermont.partner.gov

¹ CDC, Water-Related Injuries, <https://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/water-safety/index.html>

² CDC, Unintentional Drowning: Get the Facts, <https://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/water-safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html>

³ Vermont Department of Health, What is SIREN?,

<http://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/AAA.Siren%20Description%20and%20Limitations%20%28002%29.pdf>