

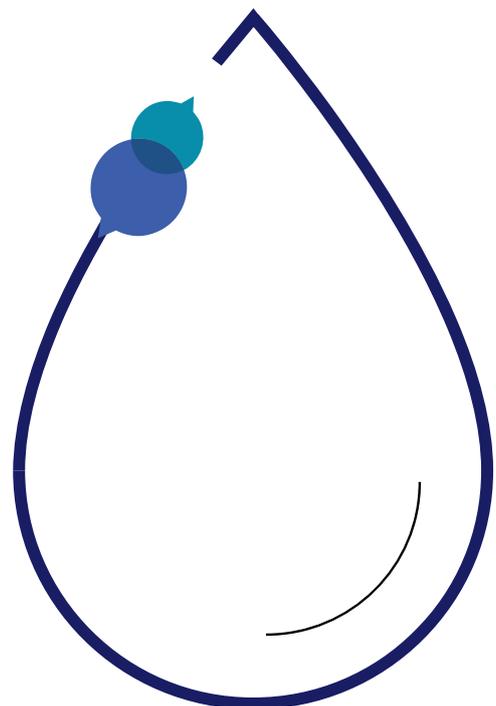
# Accidental Drowning Fatalities in Scotland: Males Aged 60-69

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A decorative graphic consisting of two overlapping circles, one blue and one teal, positioned at the end of a horizontal line.

An Analysis of the 2012 – 2016  
WAID Data (Scotland)

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## Accidental Drowning Fatalities in Scotland: Males Aged 60-69

### Introduction & Limitations

There are, on average, 50 accidental drowning fatalities a year in Scotland – a number disproportionate for Scotland for its relative population in comparison to the United Kingdom as a whole.

In response to the UK Drowning Prevention Strategy (2016-2026), Water Safety Scotland (WSS) set out specific aims and objectives for Scotland, including a reduction in accidental drowning deaths by 50 per cent by 2026. Accidental drowning fatalities are at their most frequent among males aged 60-69-years-old<sup>1</sup>.

This report focuses on Water Incident Database (WAID) data over a five-year period from 2012 to 2016. It should be noted that as the core data providers develop and improve data verification and completeness of records, the data (particularly 'crime suspected' and 'suicide suspected') is subject to change. Throughout the report, the term 'accidental' refers to both accidental and natural causes of death. Within the analysis, 58 cases have been classified as 'not recorded' because of insufficient information to categorise.

RoSPA has also carried out further research which is based upon the WAID dataset. This included further analysis on a number of topics including time of day, whether the casualty was local and what their experience level was.

Where possible, all data is reported; if this is not possible we indicate the number of records counted in the analysis, i.e n=33.

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<sup>1</sup> Water Safety Scotland (2017) Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy – a response to the UK Drowning prevention strategy. Available: <http://www.watersafetyscotland.org.uk/media/1066/response-to-scotlands-drowning-prevention-strategy.pdf>



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## Analysis and Findings

### Demography

Over the five-year period, there were **467** water-related fatalities in Scotland. Of these, **51 per cent** were identified as 'accidental' (n = 255).

For males aged 60-69 there were **35** water-related fatalities in Scotland; **80 per cent** of these were identified as 'accidental' (n =28).

The average age of accidental fatalities within this group was **65 years**.

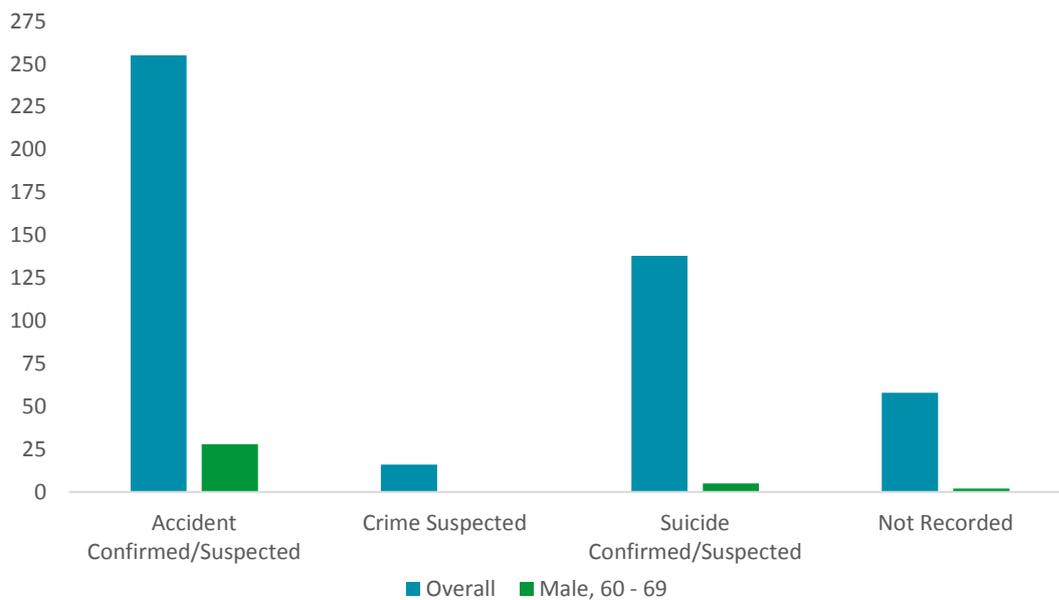


Figure 1: Overall water-related fatalities and fatalities among males 60-69 (Scotland, 2012-2016) N=467, N= 35



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### Environment

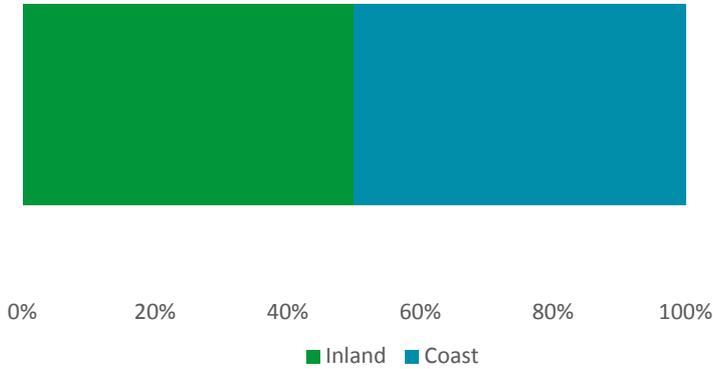


Figure 2: Location by accidental fatality (Scotland, 2012-2016) N= 28

In terms of the location of accidental fatalities over the five-year period, the events were **evenly split** between inland and coastal waters (see figure 2).

Fatalities due to drowning happen all year round. Spring in particular accounted for **more than a third of overall accidental fatalities** (36 per cent) with the month of May recording the highest number of accidental drowning fatalities (37 per cent).

There was no clear trend in terms of the weekday but Thursday and Saturday were identified as the most common days for an accidental drowning fatality in this age group (21 per cent for each).

Day time (7am-6pm) accounted for the majority of drowning deaths in this age group.

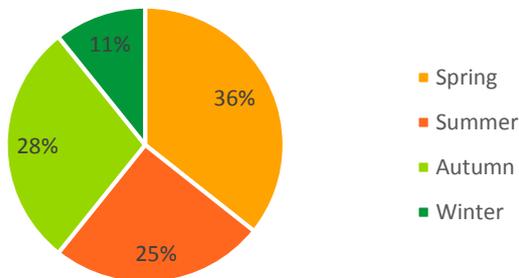


Figure 3: Accidental fatality by season (Scotland, 2012-2016). N = 28

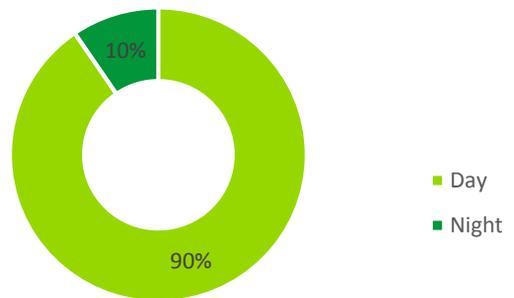


Figure 4: Time of day by accidental fatality (Scotland, 2012-2016) N= 21 (seven excluded as a result of insufficient or uncertain information)



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### Activities

When looking at the activity prior to the fatality, recreational water activities such as swimming, sailing and angling accounted for almost **6 in 10** of accidental fatalities (57 per cent, see figure 5).

The majority of recreational fatalities were the result of the following activities:

- Angling (44 per cent)
- Motor boating (19 per cent)
- Sub aqua diving (19 per cent)

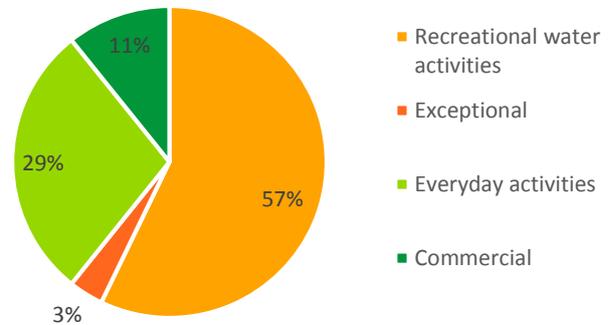


Figure 5: Activity by accidental fatality (Scotland, 2012-2016) N=28

The remaining fatalities were the result of swimming, sailing and manual-powered boats.

In terms of the location of activities in accidental fatalities, recreational activity saw a relatively even split with the coast, accounting for 56 per cent of fatalities. Everyday activities at inland water accounted for approximately 63 per cent of accidental fatalities (figure 6).

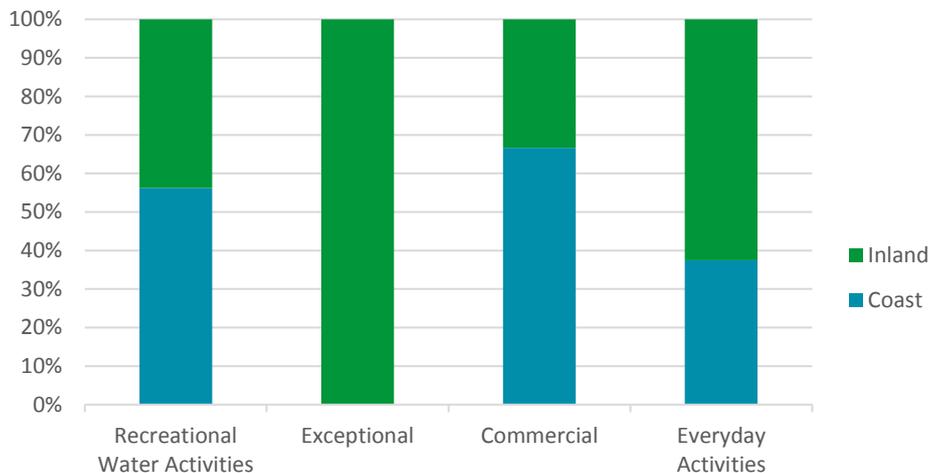


Figure 6: Recreational activity by accidental fatality (Scotland, 2012-2016). N = 28

### Behaviours

WAID data is limited in providing further information in regards to the events that lead up to a fatality and the individual behaviours which can affect the outcome. Suspected alcohol/drug use is however recorded.



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Within the 60-69 age group, the analysis found that 14 per cent of the fatalities had suspected alcohol in their system (see figure 7). This statistic should however be interpreted cautiously and noted as 'suspected'.

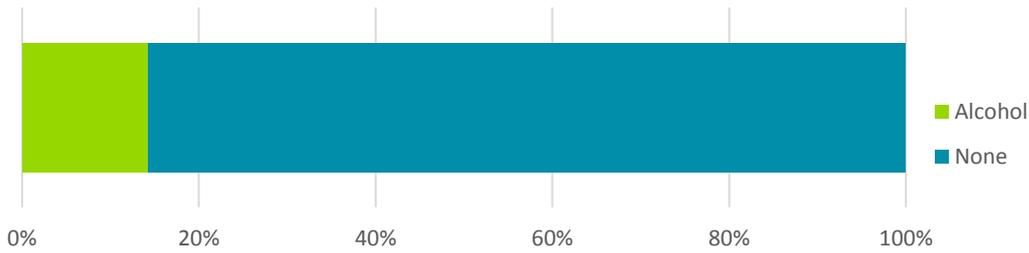


Figure 7: Suspected Alcohol Use (Scotland, 2012-2016). N = 28

Experience of the activity was taken into consideration; 72 per cent of the fatalities are classified as “unknown” despite further research into the topic. This is due to the fact that information was not readily available for the topic (see figure 8).

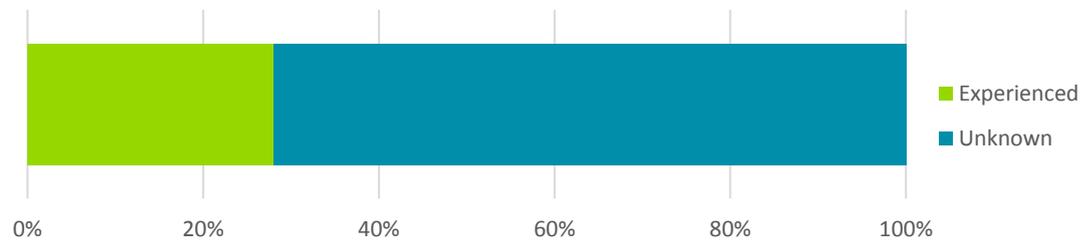


Figure 8: Experience (Scotland, 2012-2016). N = 25. Three cases were excluded from the analysis

Information was gathered on whether the fatality occurred while the person was alone or in a group at the time of the incident - 53 per cent of fatalities were alone during the activity (see figure 9).

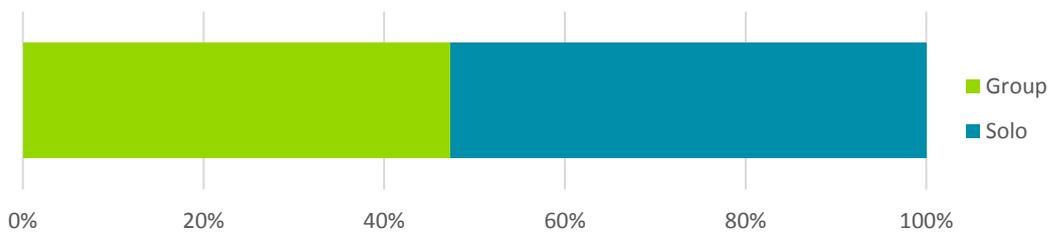


Figure 9: Group or Solo (Scotland, 2012-2016). N = 19. Nine cases were excluded from the analysis due to insufficient information to categorise

Information was also gathered on whether or not the victim was local. For the purposes of classification, local refers to living within five miles of the incident. Exactly half of the fatalities were classified as local.



## Accidental Drowning Fatalities in Scotland: Males Aged 60-69

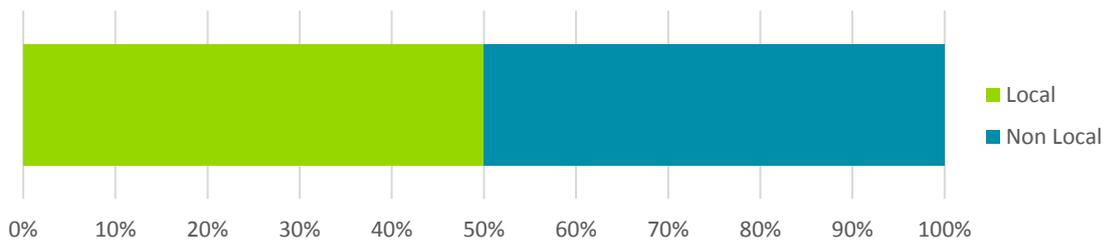


Figure 10: Local or non-local (Scotland, 2012-2016). N = 22. Six cases were excluded from the analysis due to insufficient information to categorise

## Conclusion

Prior to this analysis, very little was known about this age and demographic in Scotland. This analysis has revealed a number of key points regarding 60-69-year-old males:

- There were 35 fatalities during the five-year period
- Accidental drownings accounted for 80 per cent of this figure
- The average age of a fatality was 65
- Half of the accidental fatalities happened at the coast
- More than one third of incidents happened in spring
- Thursdays and Saturdays were the most common day for a fatality
- 90 per cent of fatalities happened during the daytime
- Approximately 6 in 10 accidental fatalities were the result of recreational water activities
- Angling is the leading cause of recreational drowning fatalities
- Alcohol was suspected in 14 per cent of cases
- Around half of the fatalities were alone prior to the incident
- Exactly half of the fatalities were classified as local.

It is hoped that this information will be useful for campaign and awareness raising and can be used to help water safety professionals in Scotland to combat drowning fatalities.





accidents don't have to happen

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