



Fiji Drowning Report 2012

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Water Safety Council of Fiji

Introduction

This drowning report only contains the incident reports collected by the Fiji Police Force.

Drowning cases are referred to death by asphyxiation. All cases have been viewed by the Fiji Police Force Coroner cases to be drowning deaths.

Report written and collated by Bronwyn Soko.

The data collection team Fiji Police Force:

- Woman Special Constable (WSC) Paulini Bolalailai,
- Woman Corporal (W/Cpl) Josifini Moceirewa,
- Woman Police Constable (WPC) Shamiana Ali.

This report is based over information collected from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2012. The 5 year comparison refers to 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2011 data sourced.

Drowning is defined as “the process of experiencing respiratory impairment from submersion/immersion in liquid.” Drowning outcomes are classified as: death, morbidity, and no morbidity.

The four factors (pillars) that lead to drowning according to the International Life Saving Federation are:

1. Lack of knowledge, disregard or misjudgment of the hazard.
2. Uninformed, unprotected or unrestricted access to the hazard.
3. Lack of supervision or surveillance.
4. An inability to cope once in difficulty.

International Comparisons

Fiji Drowning fatalities compared to Developed Nations in Oceania over 12 months.

Population	Drowning Toll 2012	Drowning Toll per 100,000
Fiji		
905,494	75	8.3
Australia		
22,620,600	284 (June 2011 - July 2012)	1.26
New Zealand		
4,405,200	93	2.11

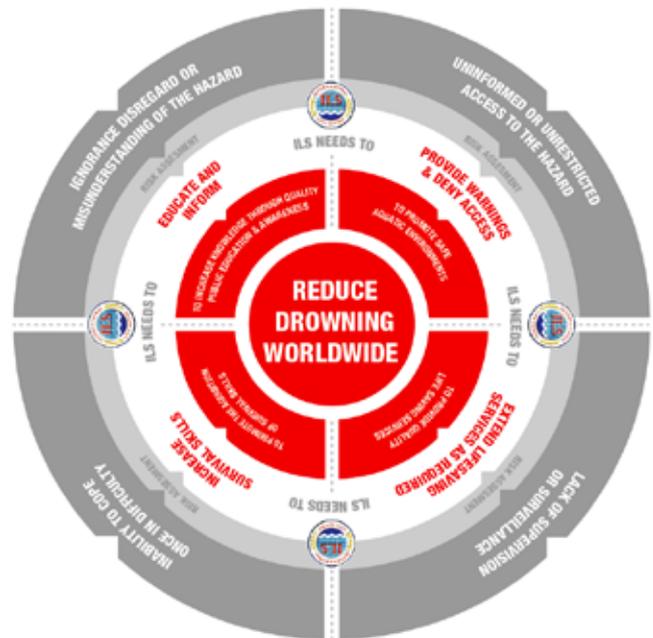


Image courtesy International Life Saving Federation

Activity

- 23 children under the age of 10 were unsupervised in or around water by parents or guardians in 2012.
- Unsupervised activity is recorded 6% higher than the 5 year comparison 2007-2011.
- 15 personal from ages 10-above 45 found drowned after a period of time. An increased percentage of 5% to the 5 year comparison 2007-2011.
- Swimming activity recorded an 8% decrease against the 5 year comparison 2007-2011.
- Increase in suspicious drowning with 3 fetuses being found in water, this is an increase of 2% against the 5 year comparison 2007-2011.

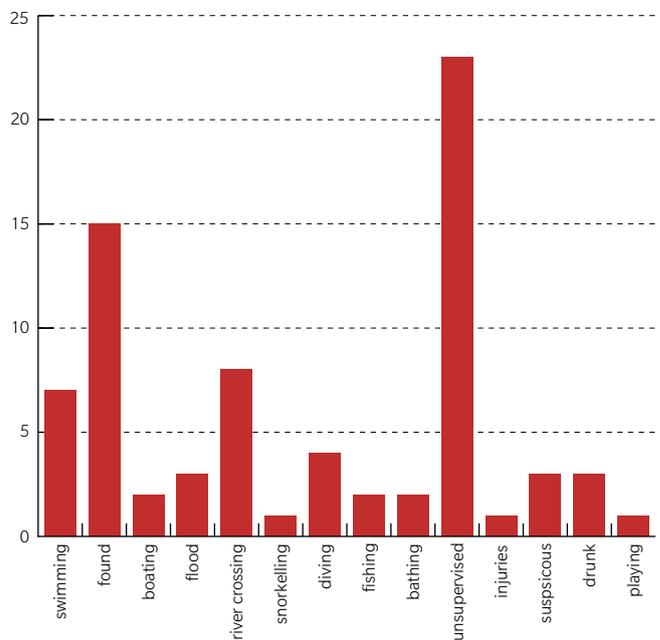
In the past drowning reports, much of the thought was the person was swimming prior to drowning. However with further investigation it was seen that many children under the age of 10 were unsupervised, thus causing the drowning incident. Children do not have the knowledge strength or ability to be on their own in or around water. Unsupervised children are a leading cause of death for children under the age of 5.



Image courtesy B.Soko

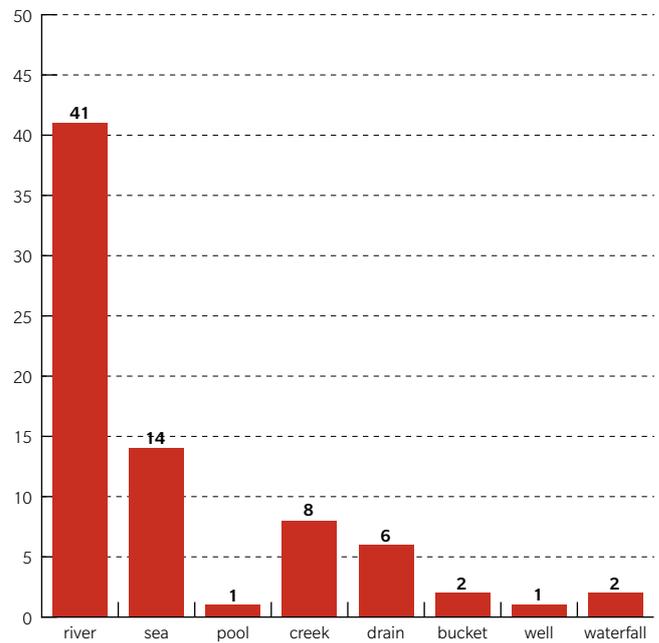
Two pillars on the worldwide scale to reduce drowning that relate to activity incidents are:

1. Lack of ability to cope once in difficulty. If the survival skills are increased for all ages and abilities then many more people would have the acquisition of survival skills and the instinct to act once in difficulty.
2. Lack of supervision or surveillance. This is not just referring to the formal supervision of lifeguards or experienced trained personal. Children under the age of 10 should be watched and looked after by parents guardians at all times in and around water. The improvement of lifesaving services and knowledge within Fiji will put into effect the safe water culture needed.



Environment

- 54% of drowning fatalities in 2012 occurred in Rivers around Fiji. This is an increase of 18% compared to the 5 year comparison 2007-2011.
- Decrease in different aquatic environments. With 11 different aquatic environments claiming lives in the 5 year comparison 2007-2011. Only 8 different aquatic environments in 2012.
- Beach environment claimed no lives in 2012 a decrease of 2% compared to the 5 year comparison 2007-2011.
- Sea environment recorded a decrease of 9% drowning fatalities compared to the 5 year comparison 2007-2011.
- Creek environment claimed an increase of 3% compared to the 5 year comparison 2007-2011.
- 13% reduction in unknown environments with all being recorded.
- More education about rivers is required.



The flooded waterways occurred mainly in the Rivers around Fiji. The different amounts of aquatic environments have reduced in 2012. Predominantly aquatic areas where drowning fatalities mainly occurred in 2012 were river, sea, pool, creek, drain, bucket and waterfalls. The selected waterways occurrences show the need for specific education and awareness in rivers and seas to enforce a safe water culture.



Image courtesy All Fiji

Division Percentage

- 52% of drowning cases being recorded in the western division. An increase of 5% compared to the 5 year comparison 2007-2011.
- 11 lives lost direct in the Western division flood natural disaster in March 2012.
- Other divisions recorded 2% decrease when compared to the 5 year comparison 2007-2011.

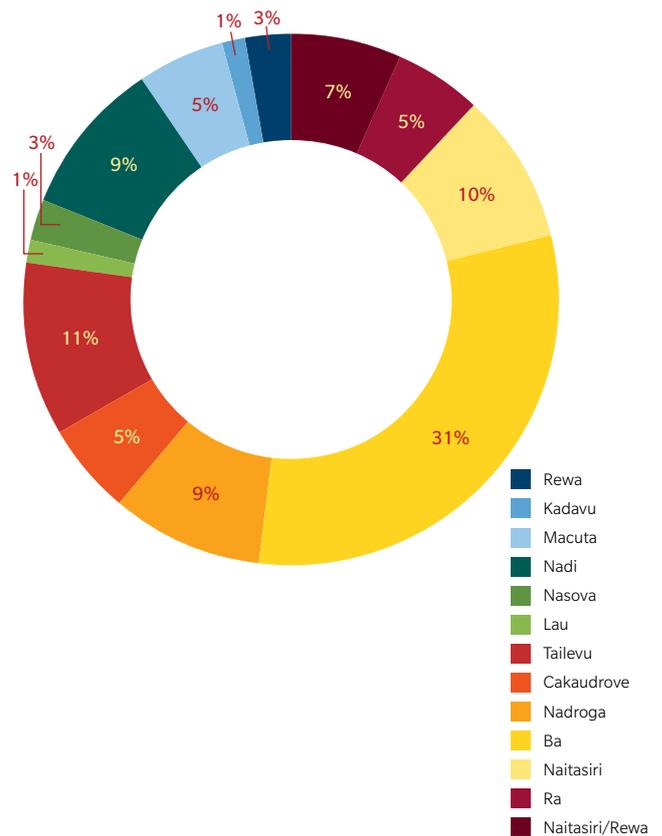
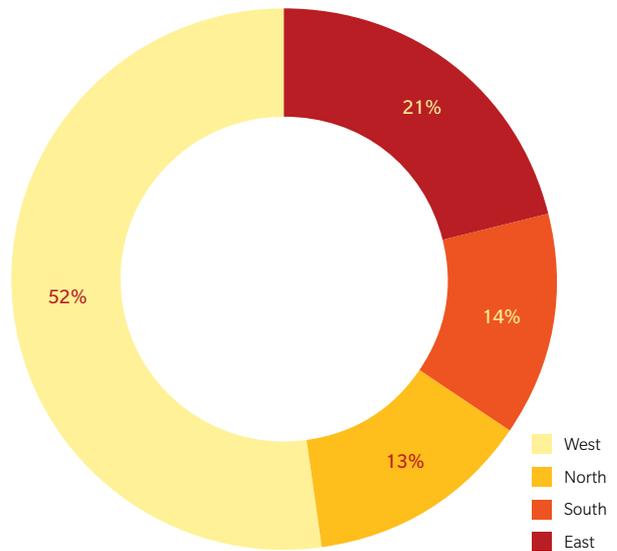
Drowning fatalities have in the past occurred largely in the Western Division of Fiji. This is the same for the year 2012. More awareness, education and knowledge must be passed onto those in this division to reduce the high fatalities.

Provincial Breakdown

- Ba province records highest drowning figures with 31% fatalities occurring.
- Lomiviti and Rotuma provinces records 0% drowning toll.



Image courtesy Lonely Planet

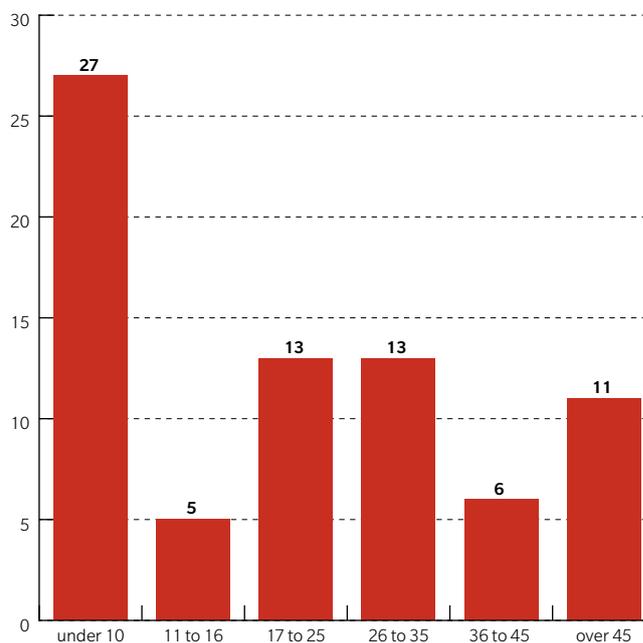


Age

- Average of 2 children per month under the age of 10 lost their life to drowning in 2012.
- 11 children under the age of 10 drowned in the last two months of 2012.
- December recorded 5 children under the age of 5 drowning.
- Increase against 5 year comparison 2007-2011 of 9% was recorded for children under 10 age group in 2012.
- Decrease against 5 year comparison 2007-2011 of 7% was recorded for the over 45 age group in 2012.
- Decrease against 5 year comparison 2007-2011 of 5% was recorded for the 36-45 age group in 2012.
- 11-16 year old age group with a 2% decrease in 2012 against the 5 year comparison 2007-2011.

A dramatic increase to drowning victims ages 26-35, double the recorded figure of the previous year 2011. This increase to this age group dramatically raises the cost to drowning. The age bracket 17-35 is noted as those who contribute to the financial input of Fiji. Over the 2011 period, it was seen that drowning fatalities cost to the economy of Fiji was approximately 6.9 million; however with the increase of age bracket and the rise in fatalities in 2012 this economical loss may be as high as 9.9 Million.

Drowning is most preventable for children under the age of 5. The need of increased supervision and lifestyle changes ensures that children are not victims to drowning fatalities. As mentioned Lack of supervision or surveillance, is a determining factor to childhood drowning with unsupervised activity in and around water.



Race Percentage

- 8% reduction in visitors drowning in Fiji over the 5 year comparison.
- 9% increase in i-Taukei drowning fatalities over the 5 year comparison.

Gender Percentage

- Increase of 4% in female recorded figures for 2012 when noted against the 5 year comparison 2007-2011.
- Decrease of 4% in the male gender for 2012 when noted against the 5 year comparison 2007-2011.
- Rise in female gender is from the children under 10 age bracket, more female children lost their lives to males under 10 in Fiji 2012.

Males around the world make for 80% of drowning incidents. The need to regularly enforce a safe water culture in the male gender is evident with the high amount of males' unnecessarily losing their life in water activities. Much of these male drowning incidents can relate to the fourth pillar in the reeducation to worldwide drowning. Lack of knowledge, disregard or misunderstanding of the hazard. This pillar can reflect how males are not often thinking of the dangers that water holds. Causing the need to educate and inform to raise awareness in water safe practices.

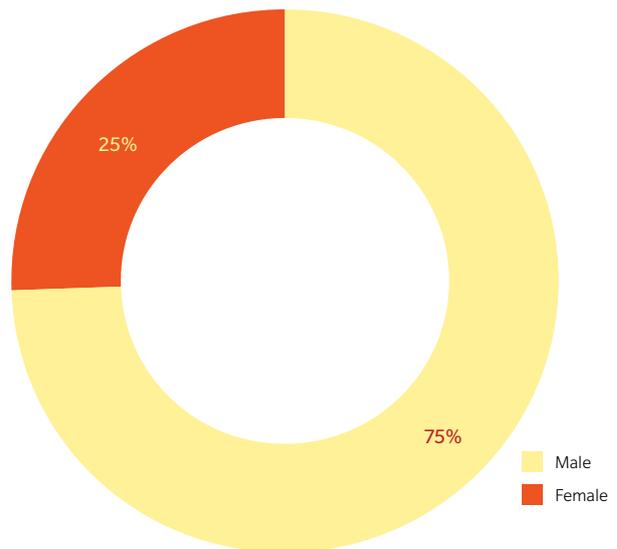
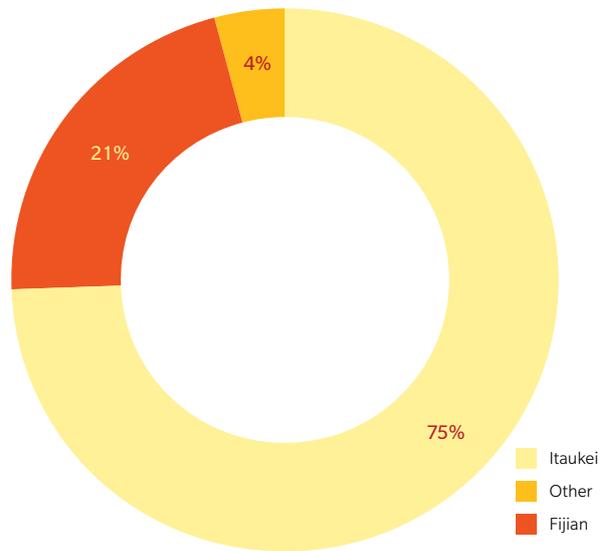


Image courtesy Fiji Outrigger and Canoe

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