

Most Fatal Rescue Events?

12/24/06 389 W - + 16 - 15

By reader request, what have been the most fatal rescue events in the state? MVAs, plane crashes, train crashes, weather events, etc.? For coal mine explosions and ship explosions, see [Mike's deadliest fires database](#).

From some quick Googling...

Roadway MVAs (with > 5)

We'll rely on reader submission for these

Air crashes, involving private/commercial (with > 5):

Hendersonville, 7/19/67, 82 (Piedmont 727 vs. Cessna 310 at 6,132 feet)

Charlotte, 9/11/74, 71 (Eastern DC-9 approaching airport)

Charlotte, 7/2/94, 37 (USAir DC-9 after missed approach)

Bolivia, 1/6/60, 34 (National DC-6 caused by detonation of dynamite within passenger cabin)

Charlotte, 1/8/03, 21 (Commuter jet during takeoff)

Morrisville, 12/13/94, 15 (Commuter plane on approach)

Cary (RDU), 2/19/88, 12 (Commuter plane during takeoff)

Chapel Hill, 2/7/81, seven

Tobaccoville, 1/20/68, six

Old Fort, 7/2/71, six

Greensboro, 4/13/73, six

Greenville, 5/15/92, six

Mecklenburg County, 6/03/63, five (source: Google news archive)

Shelby, 12/3/64, five

RDU, 2/21/64, five (source: <http://www.legeros.com/ralwake/rdu/timeline.shtml>)

Raleigh (Umstead Park), 2/25/65, five

Bolivia, 6/18/65, five

Trenton, 6/30/67, five

Morrisville, 4/2/70, five

Burlington, 12/4/71, five

Bryson City, 8/9/77, five

Sanford, 9/8/77, five

Kitty Hawk, 7/4/79, five

Cherry Point, 1/9/83, five

Banner Elk, 11/5/83, five

Flat Rock, 8/23/85, five

Indian Trail, 5/25/98, five

Mount Airy, 3/1/03, five

See <http://www.nts.gov/ntsb/query.asp> for more NTSB accident info. Also see <http://aviation-safety.net/database/>.

Air accidents involving military aircraft (With > 5 fatalities)

Pending, but found these so far:

Pope AFB, 3/23/94, 23 (and 100 injured, F-16 vs. C-130 at 300 feet above runway)

Camp Lejeune, 6/23/67, 21 (helicopter collision)

Camp Lejeune, 5/10/96, 14 (helicopter collision)

Cherry Point MCAS, 10/16/75, nine (TC-4C on initial lift-off)

Cherry Point MCAS, 3/07/59, eight
Burgaw, by 7/05/45, seven (Brazilian air force)
Pope AFB, 3/30/54, seven (C-119 on takeoff into mess hall, 31 injured)
Fort Bragg, 7/02/87, five (C-130 on dirt runway, also struck jeep with one person)

Military air accidents involving nuclear weapons!
Goldsboro, 1/24/61, three killed. See <http://www.ibiblio.org/bomb/>

Railroad accidents (harder to find)
Near Rennert, December 16, 1943, 72 killed in collision and derailment of two trains

Hurricanes:
Floyd in 1999 with 51 deaths in NC
Agnes in 1972 with 35 deaths in NC
Fran in 1996 with 24 deaths in NC
Hazel in 1954 with 19 deaths in NC

Tornadoes:
March 28, 1984 with 42 deaths in nine counties
February 19, 1884 with 23 deaths in two counties
April 2, 1936 with 14 deaths in Guilford county (and maybe others?)
November 16, 2006 with eight deaths in Columbus county
April 3, 1974 with six deaths in two counties
May 5, 1989 with five deaths in two counties
November 28, 1988 with four deaths in Wake and Nash counties
April 8, 1957 with four deaths in Sampson county

What a great way to wake up the brain on a Sunday morning!

well for MVA's you could start with Western Wake's November 1st, 2003 MVA/Pedestrian accident at Chapel Hill Rd and Nowell Rd, 6 Fatalities
CFP 7021 - 12/24/06 - 09:50

Deadliest Wake County crash before 2003 was the Friday before October 24, 1982, when six people in a car were killed in or near Raleigh.
Source: Washington Post, 10/24/82 via Google News Archive.
Legeros - 12/24/06 - 10:00

One of the nation's worst truck accidents at the time, the fiery crash of a potato van and truck filled with migrant laborers near Fayetteville.
June 6, 1957. 18 killed, 19 injured. Source: Washington Post, 6/07/57 via Google News Archive.

Eleven killed north of Lumberton when a bus, a gas tanker, and a wagon collided on October 3, 1942. Source: Google News Archive.

Ten high school students killed in Plymouth on or before July 31, 1997. Same source.

Nine killed in three-car crash in Williamston, October 17, 1965. Same source.

Nine killed in fiery crash in or near Wadesboro, by February 1, 1970. Same source.

Seven killed in head-on collision somewhere in NC, September 7, 1971. Same source.

Seven killed on I-95 near Fayetteville, on or by November 29, 1993. Same source.

Seven killed after police chase in Troutman, December 30, 2003. Same source.

Six killed, 14 injured, truck hit by train in Chadbourn, May 14, 1928. Same source.

Six killed on I-85 near Gastonia, July 16, 1967. Same source.

Five killed on the "Louisburg Highway" in Franklinton, November 5, 1926. Same source.

Five killed in Lucama, December 10, 1961. Same source.

Five killed in Pasquotank County by December 19, 1994. Same source.

Five killed in Randolph County wreck on or before December 16, 1997. Same source.

Five killed somewhere in NC by January 2, 1998. Same source.

Legeros - 12/24/06 - 10:02

Adding and editing the original list as I find items. This one's interesting, as it was a bombing:

Bolivia, 1/6/60, 34 (National DC-6 caused by detonation of dynamite within passenger cabin)

The DC-6 was one of two aircraft substituted for a Boeing 707 which had incurred mechanical difficulty. En route to Miami the aircraft disintegrated in flight. Portions of the wreckage fell near Kura Beach and the major wreckage fell about 13 miles West of Kura Beach. It appeared that a dynamite explosion had occurred which was detonated by means of dry cell batteries. The explosion occurred near the right of seat row 7.

PROBABLE CAUSE: "The accident was caused by the detonation of dynamite within the passenger cabin."

Legeros - 12/24/06 - 13:32

It is believed that a passenger named Julian Frank committed suicide when he set off the bomb in his lap or under his seat. Frank was under investigation for fraud and embezzlement and had purchased life insurance policies worth \$1 million before the crash. Given the similarities to the National 967 crash two months earlier, however, others suspect that Frank may have been innocent and was unaware that he was carrying a bomb. No one was charged in either case and the two crashes remain mysterious to this day.

Wikipedia also has an extensive article about that crash: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Ai..

Luke - 12/24/06 - 16:22

Dont know much about it but the ammunitons truck that exploded and caught fire at catch me eye in selma Hwy 70 and US 301.

Adam Brown - 12/24/06 - 18:03

A reader passes along this resource on the Catch-Me-Eye explosion on March 7, 1942 that killed four people in Johnston County:

http://www.johnstonnc.com/jc_hc_archives..

That incident is listed with the fatal fires that I've collected at <http://www.legeros.com/history/nc/fatal...>

Legeros - 12/24/06 - 18:06

I believe that there are couple more plane crashes that have happened at RDU that have involved fatalities, also there was the plane that crashed into a house off of Ebenezer Church Rd in the early 2000s. Another MVA that may no have killed as many but was a big impact on the area was the MVA on 540 that killed I believe 3 Leesville High School students.

rdu? - 12/26/06 - 00:43

Fatal crashes at RDU with fewer than five fatalities include...

June 27, 1965 – 1

October 22, 1966 – 1

December 16, 1968 – 1

February 4, 1971 – 2

February 13, 1978 – 4
February 12, 1980 – 2
February 22, 1985 – 1
July 24, 1986 – 2
May 25, 1988 – 2
August 10, 1989 – 1
February 18, 1992 – 2
April 4, 1995 – 3
July 5, 1995 – 2
December 24, 1997 – 1
July 31, 2000 – 1
December 12, 2001 – 3 (plane into house)
May 16, 2004 – 1
September 13, 2005 – 2

Other incidental plane crashes around Wake...

Plane in Raleigh, first fatal crash, 1/11/29 – 1
Army bomber in Raleigh, 8/9/42 – 3
Two Army planes in Garner, 10/29/43 – 2
Army bomber in Garner, 5/9/44 – 2
Private plane west of Wake Forest, 1/15/47 – 3
Private plane north of Raleigh, 6/1/47 – 2
Private plane in Raleigh, 8/1/64 – 1
Private plane in Wake Forest, 9/16/69 – 1
Private plane in Apex, 11/29/69 – 1
Private plane in Garner, 8/20/70 – 1
Private plane in Holly Springs, 9/5/75 – 1
Private plane in Raleigh, striking church steeple, 6/19/77 – 1
Private plane in Knightdale, 3/18/82 – 2
Private plane in Apex, 9/26/86 – 1
Balloon in Garner, 6/11/89 – 3
News helicopter in Fuquay, 12/7/91 – 3
Helicopter in Knightdale, 9/28/94 – 1
Private plane in Apex, 4/20/97 – 2
Private plane in Apex, 5/14/00 – 2
Private plane in Apex, 3/31/02 – 2

Legeros - 12/26/06 - 01:08

Another interesting one, noted on another mailing list inquiry:

March 30, 1961
B-52 near Denton, NC in Davidson County.
Six killed.
Lost control during aerial refueling attempt
Crew ordered to bail out.
Only six of eight crew had ejector seats.
Massive explosion when crashed.
Crashed off Silver Hill Mine Road.
Crater visible for 40 miles.

Legeros - 12/29/06 - 13:19

Though not as high in fatalities, the sheer numbers of victims was high for the Siloam Bridge Collapse in 1975. Remarkable was the number of victims rescued given the incident, time of night, and the weather problems that evening. Several fire departments and rescue squads (from

Yadkin, Surry and Forsyth Counties) won the "Order of the Long Leaf Pine" from then Gov. Holshouser for their actions on that nite.

From the NTSB report:

About 9:25 p.m. on February 23, 1975, an automobile struck a vital structural member of the Yadkin River Bridge near Siloam, North Carolina. The collision occurred in heavy fog. Following the impact, the bridge collapsed and both the automobile and the bridge fell into the river. Six more vehicles vaulted into the collapse zone within a 17-minute period. Four persons were killed and 16 were injured.

The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of the bridge collapse was the penetration of the timber railing by the vehicle and its subsequent impact with and crushing of a vital MP structural member of the bridge truss. The timber railing was not adequate to sustain impact at posted speeds

Jeff Hinshaw ([Email](#)) - 12/30/06 - 15:32

Someday I'll get around to a list of major rescue events, fatal or otherwise, as well as major fires by property loss or structures involved.

Legeros - 12/30/06 - 16:58

Mike, I wonder if you could look up the number of 2nd Alarm or greater fires that FDNY runs and the number of MWF RFD runs. Obviously the difference is going to be great but I would be curious to see what that actual numbers are.

curious - 12/30/06 - 19:15

I'll file for future answering, perhaps comparing the percentage of FDNY two alarms or higher to Raleigh's, provided I can obtain sample sets of data for both departments.

Legeros - 12/30/06 - 21:14

Although fortunately no deaths occurred (if I remember correctly), the Lowes Motor Speedway bridge collapse in May 2000 resulted in over 100 people receiving medical treatment, over 75 of those were transported to five area hospitals, and every available ambulance in the area was called in.

Luke - 12/30/06 - 22:31

The speedway collapse is also featured in a relatively recent book called "Disasters and Heroic Rescues of North Carolina" by Scotti Cohn. From the table of contents:

Fayetteville Is No More – The Great Fire
Remember My Last Words – The Wreck of the Steam Packet Home
Tragedy of Errors – The Wreck of the Metropolis
Many the Hopes that Vanished – The Hotel Zinzendorf Fire
A Wall of Water – The San Ciriaco Hurricane
Two Beasts in Deadly Combat – The Wild West Show Train Wreck
Caught in the Middle – The July Floods
Killer on the Loose – The Influenza Pandemic
No Use Being Sorrowful – The Coal Glen Mining Disaster
Gathering Storm – The August Floods
Like a Bad Dream – The Atlantic Coast Line Wreck
Princess in a Tower – The Highland Hospital Fire
Everything Was Just Gone – Hurricane Hazel
Fallout from a Cold War – The Crashes of Two B52 Bombers
Terrain! Terrain! – The Crash of Flight 1016
A Risky Business – The Speedway Disaster
White Wedding, Black Ice – The February Snowstorm

Legeros - 12/30/06 - 22:34

Well... go ahead and add today's crash here in Charlotte to your list. It is still unconfirmed how many were onboard of the Cessna, I've heard conflicting numbers. At least 2 dead. Plane went down in a residential area on the west side of town, fortunately no houses were struck by the plane; although, the debris is spread all over.

Luke - 12/31/06 - 16:51

An early Happy New Years to all from NYC. Yes, I know, I'm nuts....To all who are readers and contributors, hope you have a happy and safe

new year.....

Silver - 12/31/06 - 23:39

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preferred)

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To prevent spam we require you to answer this silly question

What are the FIRST TWO LETTERS of the word 'fire'?

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Small print: All html tags except and <i> will be removed from your comment. You can make links by just typing the url or mail-address.