

August 23, 2021

IIU concludes investigation into death of a male while in police custody

The Independent Investigation Unit (IIU) has concluded its investigation into the death of a male who was in police custody with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

According to the notification received, on October 30, 2020, at 11:23 am, RCMP officers were dispatched to a man with a machete threatening workers on Ebb and Flow First Nation, Manitoba.

Officers attended and located an adult male who appeared under the influence of methamphetamine. The male was highly agitated during the arrest requiring numerous members to restrain him in order to place him in custody.

The male continued to struggle during the ride in the police motor vehicle to the RCMP Detachment.

Inside the cell area, the male collapsed to the floor in medical distress. Officers called for paramedics (EMS) and initiated CPR. The detachment automated external defibrillator (AED) was deployed. EMS assumed medical treatment upon arrival at the detachment and were able to secure a heartbeat. The male was then transported to Ste. Rose Hospital.

The male appeared to have no brain activity and later passed away. The IIU was notified of the incident that same day.

As this matter concerns the death of a person that was in police custody, this was a mandatory investigation for which IIU was required to assume responsibility. A team of IIU investigators was assigned to the investigation. Three RCMP officers were designated as witness officers, and investigators met with and interviewed seven civilian witnesses.

RCMP file material, and other information reviewed by IIU investigators, included:

- RCMP occurrence summary
- RCMP officers' general reports, supplementary reports, narratives and notes

- Forensic Identification Section (FIS) occurrence report, notes and photographs
- RCMP telecom audio recordings (including 911 call)
- RCMP detachment cell video footage
- medical records
- hospital reports
- ambulance records
- autopsy and toxicology reports

Following a detailed review of this comprehensive investigation, it was determined that the male's death was a result of cardiac arrhythmia due to, or as a consequence of, methamphetamine toxicity mixed with the physiologic stress of struggle and restraint by police. The amount of methamphetamine in the male's system was significant and extremely high.

It was determined that no actions by any police officer caused or contributed to the male's death to any degree. There is no evidence that would justify the designation of any of the police officers as subject officers and there is no further requirement to continue with this investigation.

The IIU investigation is now closed, and the civilian director's complete report is available online at www.iumanitoba.ca.

The details of this investigation were first announced on November 2, 2020.

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Media inquiries may be directed to:
Communications Services Manitoba
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Information on the IIU can be found at www.iumanitoba.ca or at www.twitter.com/IIUManitoba