

December 9, 2019

IIU concludes investigation into operation of Sea-Doo by off-duty police officer

The Independent Investigation Unit (IIU) has concluded an investigation into whether a member of the Winnipeg Police Service contravened boating safety laws and consequently contributed to the injury of a child. It has concluded no charge should be laid against the subject officer.

On August 3, 2019, an officer operating a Sea-Doo in the lake at Lac du Bonnet was towing an inner tube with three children in it, when a boat traversed the space between the Sea-Doo and the tube. The tow rope became entangled with the boat's propeller and an eight-year-old child in the inner tube received a head injury that required eight stitches.

The IIU civilian director determined it was in the public interest for the agency to conduct an independent investigation into the actions of the officer.

After IIU investigators interviewed the officer, the boater, and two nearby witnesses, IIU Civilian Director Zane Tessler noted significant discrepancies in the statements provided by the boater. He concluded the boater was attempting to deflect responsibility for the accident from himself onto the officer. He further concluded the officer's actions did not contravene any regulations on towing on water.

The RCMP are continuing to investigate the boater's conduct and responsibility for the accident and it is not yet known whether any charges will be laid. The report into the IIU investigation will be released once the RCMP investigation and any subsequent prosecution is complete.

The details of this investigation were first announced on September 16, 2019.

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