

INQUEST REPORT

Lake Wilcox – Rene Anthony Zanoncello

Incident scenario & summary of facts

Name of deceased: Rene Anthony Zanoncello

Date and time of death: August 29, 1991, 5:11 p.m.

Place of death: York Central Hospital

Cause of death: Asphyxia due to immersion and aspiration

Location: Lake Wilcox, Richmond Hill

Activity at time of incident: Swimming

On August 29, 1991, Rene Zanoncello was at a beach on Lake Wilcox, located within the Town of Richmond Hill, with members of his family and friends of the family.

An hour after the lifeguards had left the beach for the day, Rene went missing. A search was conducted and Rene was discovered in the waters of Lake Wilcox. He was carried to the beach and resuscitation efforts were carried out by bystanders, the Richmond Hill Fire Department and finally York Central Hospital emergency staff.

These efforts were unsuccessful and Rene was pronounced dead at York Central Hospital.

JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Potentially hazardous conditions within the supervised beach area should be identified and where possible corrected. If corrective actions are not practical then the existence and location of the hazards should be appropriately communicated to patrons of the beach.

Lifesaving Society Notes

The Society endorses this recommendation. Operators should not normally establish swimming areas where hazards exist. However, changing weather conditions often alters beach areas. Operators should establish a regular inspection schedule of their supervised beach areas and correct any deficiencies or install signage that warns bathers of any hazards.

2. A sign communicating the message that “the primary responsibility for the safety of children is with the accompanying adult” should be posted at each public entrance to the beach area.

Lifesaving Society Notes

The Society endorses this recommendation. Signage should be posted that reinforces parental supervision. The Lifesaving Society's public education campaign on drowning prevention and a copy of the poster "Within Arms' Reach" are useful tools in the education of parents/guardians about the dangers of the water.

3. A sign indicating lifeguard hours should be posted at all public entrances.

Lifesaving Society Notes

The Society endorses this recommendation. Signage indicating the hours of operation and the location of the nearest emergency telephone should be posted.

4. Public phones are required, with emergency phone numbers posted, within a reasonable distance from patrons of the beach.

Lifesaving Society Notes

The Society endorses this recommendation. A form of communication device should be available to the public in the event of an emergency. The location should be clearly posted for patrons.

5. A public announcement should be made when the lifeguards are going off duty.

Lifesaving Society Notes

The Society endorses the recommendation. A verbal announcement as well as signage indicating there is no lifeguard on duty would be an appropriate form of public education around the supervision of the beach area.

6. A designated marked off area should be established for children and/or non-swimmers.

Lifesaving Society Notes

The Society does not endorse this recommendation but does support the designation of a shallow water area for young children. There should be marked off areas where there is a change in the depth of the water. A child can drown in any depth and focus should be placed on recommendation No.2 – a message that "the primary responsibility for the safety of children is with the accompanying adult" should be posted at each public entrance to the beach area.

7. The boundaries of the supervised beach areas should be clearly identified at all times.

Lifesaving Society Notes

The Society endorses this recommendation. A buoy line, flags, etc., could be used to demark the transition from supervised to non-supervised area. Signage should accompany this so that the public is aware of their purpose.