



Ontario Underwater Council
www.underwatercouncil.com

2011 Report
on
Scuba Diving Incidents outside Ontario, and
Recommendations to Prevent Recurrence

Compiled by:

<i>Stephen Weir</i>	<i>Sport Safety Consultant</i>
<i>Ayisha Hassanali</i>	<i>Sport Safety Consultant</i>
<i>Raimund Krob</i>	<i>Sport Safety Advisor</i>
<i>Mar Smith</i>	<i>Director, Sport Safety</i>



Document Control

Date	Description of Change	By Whom
April 14, 2012	Created document	Dave Noble
April 15, 2012	Incident - St Lawrence River	Ayisha Hassanali

OUC Contact Information:

Ontario Underwater Council
1 Concorde Gate
Suite 109
Toronto, Ontario
M3C 3N6

Phone: 416 426 7033
Fax: 416 426 7336

Email: ouc@underwatercouncil.com
Website: www.underwatercouncil.com

Submitting an Incident Report

To submit a report, you should contact one of the [OUC board members](#).
You can also complete and return an **Incident Submission Form**.

For comments on this document please contact

OUC's Director of Sport Safety
ouc.safety@underwatercouncil.com



Table of Contents

Document Control	2
Ontario Underwater Council.....	4
Goals:	4
Intended Audience:	4
Scope:	5
Publication Frequency:	5
Recommendations:	6
Disclaimer:.....	6
SECTION A: Fatalities - Summaries & Recommendations	7
<i>Date of Incident:</i> 2011-08-10.....	8
Summary:.....	8
OUC Recommendations:	8
<i>Date of Incident:</i> 2011-mm-dd	9
Summary:.....	9
OUC Recommendations:	9
SECTION B: Near Misses - Summaries & Recommendations.....	10
<i>Date of Incident:</i> 2011-mm-dd	11
Summary:.....	11
OUC Recommendations:	11
SECTION C: Appendices.....	12
Appendix #1.....	13
Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality of 2011-mm-dd:.....	13
Appendix #2	15
Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality of 2011-mm-dd:.....	15



Ontario Underwater Council

Report on Scuba Diving Related Incidents outside Ontario, and recommendations to prevent recurrence.

Goals:

The goals of this report are to:

- **Educate** (inform) readers on Scuba Diving incidents that have occurred outside Ontario, the direct causes leading up to those incidents, and recommendations to prevent recurrence.
- **Prevent** and /or reduce the numbers and/or severity of future scuba diving incidents wherever divers are diving, thus making the sport of scuba diving more safe
- **Earn** the privilege of continued sport self-governance by demonstrating that the greater Ontario scuba diving community cares deeply about sport safety and that it works hard to identify past incidents, and prevent future ones.

Intended Audience:

Although this report is posted on the Web and can therefore be read by anyone, the *intended* audience for this report is:

- Ontario Underwater Council (OUC) Members and Member Organizations (Clubs, Charter Operators, Retailers, etc.)
- Not-yet OUC Members and Member Organizations (Clubs, Charter Operators, Retailers, etc.)
- Scuba Certification Agencies (e.g. ACUC, PADI, NAUI, BSAC, etc.) that certify divers in Ontario
- Scuba Safety Organizations (e.g. Divers Alert Network) that provide services in Ontario
- Ontario Government, Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Office of the Chief Coroner (Dr. Andrew McCallum at time of publication)
- Other Canadian Provincial Underwater Councils, whether still self-governed, or provincially-governed (e.g. Quebec)
- Other Ontario Provincial Sport Organizations
- Other users of Ontario waters, including but not limited to: commercial and recreational power boaters, sailors, hydro-electric power generating companies, commercial and sport fishing users, personal watercraft operators, etc.



Scope:

The scope of this particular report includes:

- Only scuba diving incidents that OUC has learned about independently and those that have been brought to OUC's attention by outside parties.
- Scuba diving incidents that have occurred anywhere in the world, which generally involve Ontario divers
- Recreational scuba diving incidents
- Technical (including Re-breather) scuba diving incidents
- Recommendations to prevent recurrence, where sufficient direct causes have been identified to allow relevant recommendations to be made.
- Corroborated information from public domain, survivors interviews, coroner's reports, police, witnesses, that OUC deems to be helpful in understanding the incidents/s.

The following are *not* in scope of this report:

- Snorkelling incidents
- Free-diving (breath-hold diving) incidents
- Everything that is not expressly listed as in-scope of this report shall be, by definition, out of scope of this report.

Publication Frequency:

OUC's goal is to re-publish this living document as soon as possible after any of the following occur:

- When we become aware of, and have confirmed that an incident has occurred.
- When we receive more information or facts about the incident.
- When we develop recommendations to prevent the incident from recurring in the future.
- If you wish to be notified of these re-publications, please sign up to OUC's Safety Advisory e-mail distribution list at www.underwatercouncil.com/maillinglist



Recommendations:

The goal of OUC's recommendations is to prevent future recurrence of scuba incidents.

- OUC can only publish relevant recommendations to prevent recurrence if we have sufficient hard facts relating to the direct causes of the incident.
- This means that it could take some time between initial publication that an incident has occurred, and the subsequent publication of relevant recommendations to prevent recurrence.
- OUC needs **your** (the greater Ontario Scuba Community's) help to reduce / prevent future scuba diving incidents. If you are aware of such hard facts or information regarding an incident, or know someone who is, please inform BOTH of the following individuals as soon as possible:
 - OUC's Director of Sport Safety at:
 - ouc.safety@underwatercouncil.com AND
 - OUC's Scuba Incident & Prevention Report Coordinator at:
 - ouc.reports@underwatercouncil.com
- Wherever possible, OUC will position recommendations positively (what people **should do** to prevent future incidents), rather than negatively.
- OUC's recommendations may be directed inwards towards the diving community, and/or outwards to other users of Ontario Waters.
- In some circumstances, third parties such as Police, Coroner's Office, etc. may conduct all areas of the investigation into the incident, and only involve OUC after the investigation has been concluded. These third parties may then request OUC to develop the recommendations and to use OUC's communications channels and contacts to communicate them to the greater Ontario Scuba Community.

Disclaimer:

No claim is made by the OUC, OUC's Director of Sport Safety, OUC's Scuba Incident & Prevention Report Coordinator, or by any contributors, as to the completeness or accuracy of information contained within this report.

Notwithstanding the above, OUC, subject to the availability of its volunteer resources, makes every effort to verify and corroborate the information provided in this report, and to ensure that the recommendations to prevent recurrence are relevant, and if followed, would prevent a similar incident from happening in the future.

Certain personal risks are inherent in most sports, and the sport of scuba diving is no exception. By engaging in the sport of scuba, you accept these risks. No amount of training, experience, equipment, policies, etc. can completely eliminate all personal risks, and the OUC, its Board Members, Regional Coordinators, and Members are not responsible for any losses, injury, or death sustained as a result of members or non-members taking these risks.



SECTION A: Fatalities - Summaries & Recommendations

Fatalities - Summaries and Recommendations are listed in chronological order.



Date of Incident: 2011-08-10

Summary:

A fatal accident occurred on the wreck of the Roy A. Jodrey in the St. Lawrence River. Michael K. Roberts passed away due to a heart attack caused by arteriosclerosis, essentially hardening of the arteries.

Three divers had planned a technical staged decompression dive on the 725 foot wreck of the Jodrey, which lies in a maximum depth of about 250 feet. Each of the divers was using a rebreather with trimix and all had bailout. The victim was using an Inspiration CCR (Closed Circuit Rebreather).

When the divers were at 200 feet about one hour into the planned two hour dive, Mr. Roberts appeared to be disoriented and then went unconscious. Blair Mott and Chris Monk started to bring Mr. Roberts up and at 50 feet, Mr. Roberts began convulsing. Mr. Mott skipped 50 minutes of his planned decompression stops and brought Mr Roberts to the surface. Meanwhile, Mr. Monk completed just less than minimal deco and arrived at the surface a little later. When Mr. Mott reached the surface with the victim, Mr. Mott was spotted waving to the U.S. Coast Guard boats that were engaging in training exercises nearby and help was sent. An Emergency Medical Technician was on board the U.S. Coast Guard boat and performed CPR.

Mr Roberts was pronounced dead at River hospital.
Mr. Mott and Mr. Monk did not require any treatment.

For public domain information of this incident, please refer to Section C, Appendix #1 of this document.

OUC Recommendations:

Divers should review their fitness to dive at least annually; more often if there are known or suspected cardiac or other health issues, preferably with a physician who is aware of the complications of diving.

*Divers Alert Network has a number for physicians to call for consultation on medical concerns. **DAN Medical Information Line (+1-919-684-2948).***

The WRSTC has a medical form which includes background information for physicians. A download link is available on the OUC Safety page.

Maintain a nutritious, well balanced diet

Engage in an active lifestyle and moderate exercise every day or at least several times per week



Date of Incident: 2011-mm-dd

Summary:

TBD

For public domain information of this incident, please refer to Section C, Appendix #nn of this document.

OUC Recommendations:

- *Recommendation 1.*
- *Recommendation 2.*



SECTION B: Near Misses - Summaries & Recommendations

Definition of a “Near Miss”

A “Near Miss” is any scuba-related situation or incident that did not result in a fatality, but that did put the diver/s health and/or safety at risk.

To report a near miss and submit it for consideration for publication in this report, please send an e-mail to ouc.safety@underwatercouncil.com with all relevant details.



Date of Incident: 2011-mm-dd

Summary:

OUC Recommendations:

- *Recommendation 1*
- *Recommendation 2*



SECTION C: Appendices



Appendix #1

Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality of 2011-08-10:

<http://www.lfpress.com/news/london/2011/08/11/18540171.html>

Komoka man risks life in trying to save diver

TRAGEDY: Blair Mott disregarded his own safety
By DALE CARRUTHERS, THE LONDON FREE PRESS
Last Updated: August 12, 2011 8:12am

A Komoka man risked his life trying to save a fellow scuba diver who lost consciousness deep in the St. Lawrence River.

Blair Mott, 42, and two other divers, Christopher Monk of Aurora and Michael Roberts of Kingston, were exploring a sunken ship on the U.S. side of the river when disaster struck.

Halfway into the two-hour dive, Roberts got into trouble 40 metres below the surface, said a friend of Mott, who didn't want to be identified.

Mott and Monk started to take an unconscious Roberts to the surface, but because of the depth, they couldn't ascend rapidly.

When Roberts started to go into convulsions, the two men knew they were running out of time.

Still 12 metres from the surface, Mott made the dangerous decision to take his friend up the rest of the way without taking time to decompress, said the friend.

Monk stayed back to decompress.

The U.S. Coast Guard took Roberts, a 39-year-old Kingston man, to River Hospital in Alexandria Bay, N.Y., where he was pronounced dead.

Mott and Monk were also taken to hospital for observation.

State police said the three men were exploring the wreckage of the Roy A. Jodrey, a 230-metre-long steel freighter that sank in 1972 after hitting a sandbar near Alexandria Bay.

The bow of the wreck is in 50 metres of water and the stern is down about 80 metres.

Drivers must have technical diving certification to go below 40 metres, said Terry Kovacevic of London Scuba Centre.

"I do know that Blair is a qualified and certified diver with technical experience," Kovacevic said.

Coast guard officials are investigating.

"We're also going to have the (diving) gear checked," said New York State Police Investigator Dan Tordy.

The accident comes less than two weeks after a Clinton doctor died while scuba diving in Lake Huron near Tobermory.

On July 31, Jan Raczycki, a 49-year-old father of two, died after exploring a ship wreck at Fathom Five National Marine Park, an underwater preserve popular with divers



<http://www.watertowndailytimes.com/article/20110812/NEWS03/708129935>

Autopsy reveals scuba diver died from heart attack

By [CRAIG FOX](#)
TIMES STAFF WRITER
FRIDAY, AUGUST 12, 2011

ALEXANDRIA BAY — An autopsy has revealed that the scuba diver who died during a dive Wednesday in the St. Lawrence River suffered a heart attack.

Michael K. Roberts, 39, Kingston, Ontario, was pronounced dead at River Hospital after he became unconscious in about 200 feet of water while exploring the Roy A. Jodrey, a 729-foot vessel that sank in 1974 adjacent to the Coast Guard station on Wellesley Island.

During an autopsy Thursday afternoon, Jefferson County Medical Examiner Dr. Samuel A. Livingstone determined that Mr. Roberts suffered from arteriosclerosis — hardening of the arteries — and had a heart attack while diving with two friends.

“He had a heart attack, so it was natural causes,” State Police Investigator Daniel G. Tordy said.

The two other divers, Blair C. Mott, 42, Komoka, Ontario, and Christopher D. Monk, 33, Aurora, Ontario, told state police that Mr. Roberts “became disoriented and went unconscious,” Mr. Tordy said.

Both divers helped Mr. Roberts get to the surface, where a Coast Guard crew training on a boat came across the situation. While trying to resuscitate Mr. Roberts, the Coast Guard crew took him by boat to River Hospital.

Mr. Mott was treated at River Hospital and transferred to Upstate Medical University, Syracuse, where he was treated and later released.

It was feared that Mr. Mott might have suffered from “the bends” from skipping a safety procedure before going to the surface with Mr. Roberts, Mr. Tordy said. As it turned out, Mr. Mott did not suffer any medical trouble, Mr. Tordy said.

Mr. Monk was treated at River Hospital as a precaution and released later Wednesday

Public References:

<http://www.scubaboard.com/forums/accidents-incidents/392360-three-divers-rescued-st-lawrence.html>

<http://ontariodiving.com/showthread.php?14484-Another-death-this-summer&daysprune=-1>



Appendix #2

Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality of 2011-mm-dd: