

## INQUEST REPORT

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### St. John's – Yi Fan Wang

## Incident scenario & summary of facts

**Name of deceased:** Yi Fan Wang

**Date and time of death:** September 20, 2011 3:16 PM

**Place of death:** Saint John Regional Hospital, St. John, New Brunswick

**Cause of death:** Drowning

**Location:** Canada Games Aquatic Centre

**Activity at time of incident:** Swimming

**Activity taking place at time of drowning:** Swimming

Yi Fan Wang was a student attending a local college in St. John, New Brunswick. He has been in Canada a few weeks. On Saturday September 20, 2011 he attended an Ultimate swim at the Canada Games Centre swimming pool in St John. During this swim all equipment is available for the public. The Centre has a leisure swimming pool area and a 50 meter swimming area with several diving boards, a five meter platform, a waterslide which starts at the top of the 5 m platform and drops bathers from a height of 3 m into the deep end, and a Tarzan rope. The swimming pools are lifeguarded by Canada Games Centre staff.

On that day the 50 m swimming pool was described as “not that busy”. Three lifeguards were on deck: one on the far side of the pool at the drop-off near the bulkhead, one at the top of the waterslide on the 5 meter platform, and one in the deep end near the diving boards.

Yi Fan came to the Centre with two friends. They described Yi Fan as a swimmer. They entered the shallow end where they played for a while and then the two friends went down to the deep end and off the waterslide. They then returned to the shallow end and encouraged Yi Fan to try the waterslide. He went down to the slide and went off. Video footage shows him bobbing several times before submerging. He was spotted three minutes later by the lifeguard on top of the platform. He had moved across the swimming pool and was partially submerged. Lifeguards responded, removed him from the water, began CPR and activated EMS. He was taken to hospital where he died.

## JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide direct supervision of the Tarzan rope and waterslide.

When in operation, the Canada Games Aquatic Centre should provide direct supervision of each piece of equipment.

For the waterslide an attendant should be stationed at the start area of the waterslide while a lifeguard should be stationed adjacent the waterslide drop area.

For the Tarzan swing rope a lifeguard should be stationed adjacent to the rope.

All waterslide and Tarzan rope lifeguards should be responsible for supervision of these devices only and not assigned to supervise any other equipment or pool area.

### Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society endorses this recommendation. This higher risk equipment requires direct supervision by a lifeguard. This lifeguard should not be responsible for the supervision of any other areas of the pool and should focus their attention on bathers utilizing this equipment only. This recommendation was presented to the jury by Michael Shane, Safety Management Director, Lifesaving Society.

2. Establish and post in the pool office lifeguard position, scanning zones, and rotation charts for all recreational swim periods.

Supervisory staff should ensure that for each of the various aquatic activities (e.g., recreation swim periods), lifeguard placement and supervision zones need to be defined. Issues effecting the placement of lifeguarding personnel should be identified (e.g. surface water glare) and resolved. Lifeguard rotation schedules should then be created.

Once defined, all of these items need to be documented and incorporated into the staff handbook and operational procedures manual and included in regular staff training sessions. Diagrams or charts illustrating these placements and procedures should be posted in the pool office.

should establish and implement standard admission requirements for unaccompanied children attending recreational swim periods.

### Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society endorses this recommendation. It is important for the pool operator to designate lifeguard stations and bather to lifeguard ratios. This ensures the adequate supervision of bathers in the swimming pools and also identifies for lifeguards their stations, rotation patterns and zones of responsibility. This will ensure that adequate supervision is being provided to bathers. This recommendation was presented to the jury by Michael Shane, Safety Management Director, Lifesaving Society.

3. Enhance lifeguard scanning training.

A training session should be conducted for all lifeguards highlighting scanning techniques and scanning standards. The Society has created a PowerPoint presentation which pool supervisory personnel can access. In addition, lifeguard scanning practices should be monitored on a random and ongoing basis. The Society's SEE (Supervision Evaluation and Enhancement) evaluation system can assist pool supervisory personnel with swimming pool scanning evaluation and the subsequent planning of training sessions.

### Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society endorses this recommendation. Lifeguards must remain vigilant while on duty and operators have a responsibility to ensure that lifeguards demonstrate this vigilance. Monitoring, providing feedback and training staff in proper scanning techniques will enhance safety of bathers. This recommendation was presented to the jury by Michael Shane, Safety Management Director, Lifesaving Society.

#### 4. Create 911 call script checklist.

A 911 call script checklist should be created to assist the facility caller in collecting and relaying information to EMS services. This should be created by working with EMS services and the Canada Games Aquatic Centre. All facility staff should be trained in the use of this checklist.

### Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society endorses this recommendation. Staff should have immediate access to a script which will relay the vital facts concerning the victim's condition to EMS. This will ensure EMS have vital information required to direct a response. This recommendation was presented to the jury by Michael Shane, Safety Management Director, Lifesaving Society.

#### 5. Establish a bystander intervention care policy.

When an emergency occurs bystanders often come forward to assist. In order to ensure aquatic staff has clear direction on what assistance they may offer, supervision that is required, and the bystander removal authority staff possess, a policy should be developed and staff trained in its application.

### Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society endorses this recommendation. Staff responding to an emergency situation must be aware of corporation policy with regard to the use of bystanders. This allows them to quickly respond in an appropriate manner when a bystander steps forward to assist. This will also help to ensure the supervision of bathers when a situation occurs. This recommendation was presented to the jury by Michael Shane, Safety Management Director, Lifesaving Society.

6. Enhance waterslide signage.

The design of this waterslide requires bathers using the slide be good swimmers. Signage should be installed warning of deep water and slide rules (see Appendix 1).

### Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society endorses this recommendation. This a very unique slide (3 m drop into deep water) and bathers should be warned of the need for strong swimming skills when using this slide. This will enhance safety and reduce the likelihood of bathers experiencing difficulty when dropped into the pool. This recommendation was presented to the jury by Michael Shane, Safety Management Director, Lifesaving Society.

7. Promote the completion of the Lifesaving Society Comprehensive Aquatic Safety Audit.

The purpose of the aquatic audit is to maximize the safety the safety of participants utilizing public pools. An aquatic safety audit identifies what steps might be taken to minimize the risk of drowning or serious water related injuries in aquatic facilities.

### Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society endorses this recommendation. The Canada Games Centre should complete a comprehensive review of all aquatic operating practices to ensure they meet provincial guidelines requirements and to identify what steps may be taken to reduce the risk of an incident occurring in the future. This recommendation was presented to the jury by Michael Shane, Safety Management Director, Lifesaving Society.

8. Certify management staff with the Lifesaving Society Aquatic Management Training certification.

In many aquatic facilities there are management personnel responsible for the direction of aquatic staff. In order to ensure they are familiar with aquatic standards, all management personnel must receive training. The Lifesaving Society has a certification program that would ensure personnel have the necessary information to safely manage aquatic facilities.

### Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society endorses this recommendation. This recommendation was presented to the jury by Michael Shane, Safety Management Director, Lifesaving Society.

## To the Lifesaving Society

1. Revise the Pool and Waterfront Guidelines for New Brunswick, September 2010.

The Lifesaving Society, New Brunswick Branch has published these guidelines for use by public aquatic facilities. This information is particularly important to New Brunswick pool operators and owners because of the lack of Regulations. Items for review by the Society should include but are not limited to:

- Supervision standards for swimming pools over 500 square metres
- Specialty equipment supervision- e.g.: Tarzan swing ropes, slides, mats

### Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society endorses this recommendation. This is often the role of the Lifesaving Society to assist government and operators in establishing standards for the safe operation of their aquatic facilities. The Lifesaving Society has the experience, expertise and resources to ensure this is completed in a comprehensive and timely manner. This recommendation was presented to the jury by Michael Shane, Safety Management Director, Lifesaving Society.

#### 2. Establish universal signage templates.

Communicating with a multicultural community is important especially when bather safety is at stake. Pictograms should be designed and aquatic facilities encouraged to use these to warn and educate bathers regarding safe practices and hazards around aquatic facilities (Appendix 2).

### Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society endorses this recommendation. Communication with the public is critical to ensure safety messages are understood. Given the growing multicultural nature of our customers this type of messaging will enhance communication and safety in our aquatic facilities. This recommendation was presented to the jury by Michael Shane, Safety Management Director, Lifesaving Society

### Other recommendations

1. Additional lighting to be installed in the deep end area (overhead and /or underwater) to ensure adequate visibility to the bottom of the competition pool.

### Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society does not endorse this recommendation. There was no evidence the lighting levels were a factor in the drowning. The Lifesaving Society does recommend as listed in the Lifesaving Society Recommendation #7: Promote the completion of the Lifesaving Society Comprehensive Aquatic Safety Audit. This will evaluate lighting levels at the facility and determine if changes are necessary.

2. Establish a New Brunswick Aquatic Association to publish standard safety guidelines for public aquatic facilities and pool owner/operator.

## Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society endorses this recommendation but recommends that the Lifesaving Society Pool and Waterfront Guidelines for New Brunswick, September 2010 should be the starting point in the review of safe operating practices for public aquatic facilities. Stakeholders such as the New Brunswick Aquatic Association should be consulted during this review.

3. Portable telephones at key locations which may include lifeguard posts, emergency stations, etc.

## Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society endorses this recommendation. The Lifesaving Society supports the need for an effective communications system which will assist staff in accessing EMS when an emergency occurs. The facility should put in place a suitable system that will address the facility's needs and maintain the system in working order.

4. Spine boards should be used in all "major accidents" (as defined in the Canada Games Aquatic Centre Policy and Procedure Manual).

## Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society does not endorse this recommendation. The Society believes the use of a spinal board is dependent on the situation and the decision to use it should be made by NLS lifeguards.

5. Add an additional lifeguard to the shallow end of the pool.

## Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society does not endorse this recommendation. An additional lifeguard in the shallow end of the swimming pool would not likely have enhanced supervision of the deep end. Instead the Centre should conduct a review to establish and then post in the pool office lifeguard position, scanning zones, and rotation charts for all recreational swim periods.

6. Lifeguards should have fanny packs with masks, gloves, etc.

## Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society endorses this recommendation. To ensure immediate access to important first aid equipment, lifeguards should wear a fanny pack stocked with a pocket mask and latex gloves. Additionally, these packs may contain minor first aid supplies such as band aids. The contents should be checked daily and recorded on the daily log.

7. Pre-recorded announcement of pool safety instructions to be played in strategic areas at strategic times.

## Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society does not endorse this recommendation. This mechanism for educating swimmers is ineffective. The Society believes the Canada Games Aquatic Centre should establish a targeted public campaign to educate swimmers prior to the arrival and at the pool reception area through signage etc. Messages should include but are not limited to: admission standards, medical condition supervision requirements, safe pool practices, Swim to Survive.

8. New Brunswick paramedics should be required to have a minimum of Advanced Paramedic training instead of Primary Care Paramedic training.

## Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society endorses this recommendation. The Society supports all advanced training that will enhance staff qualifications and better enable them to respond to the emergency situations they face each day and enhance the treatment and likelihood of a success rescue.