



# 2008 Report on Scuba Diving Related Incidents in Ontario

**Compiled by:**

**David Noble**

*Director, Sport Safety*



# Document Control

Date	Description of Change	By Whom
January 1, 2008	Created document	Dave Noble
June 17, 2008	Preliminary of accident on Ottawa River June 7	Dave Noble
June 20, 2008	Info confirmed – occurred in Ontario – rec'd 20 <sup>th</sup>	Dave Noble
July 15, 2008	Craig Whitehouse – Tobermory – July 13 <sup>th</sup>	Dave Noble
Aug 22, 2008	Serge Trottier – Brockville – Aug 20 <sup>th</sup>	Dave Noble

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## 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](mailto:ouc.safety@underwatercouncil.com)



## Table of Contents

Document Control .....	2
Submitting an Incident Report .....	2
Ontario Underwater Council.....	4
Foreword:.....	4
Disclaimer:.....	4
SECTION A: Fatalities - Summaries & Recommendations.....	5
<i>Date of Incident:</i> 2008-06-11 .....	6
Summary:.....	6
OUC Recommendations:.....	6
<i>Date of Incident:</i> 2008-07-13.....	7
Summary:.....	7
OUC Recommendations:.....	7
<i>Date of Incident:</i> 2008-08-20.....	8
Summary:.....	8
OUC Recommendations:.....	8
<i>Date of Incident:</i> 2008-mm-dd .....	9
Summary:.....	9
OUC Recommendations:.....	9
SECTION B: Near Misses - Summaries & Recommendations.....	10
<i>Date of Incident:</i> 2008-mm-dd .....	11
Summary:.....	11
OUC Recommendations:.....	11
SECTION C: Appendices.....	12
Appendix #1.....	13
Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality of 2008-06-11:.....	13
Appendix #2.....	15
Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality of 2008-07-13:.....	15
Appendix #3.....	18
Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality of 2008-08-20:.....	18
Appendix #4.....	20
Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality of 2008-mm-dd:.....	20



# Ontario Underwater Council

## 2008 Report on Scuba-Diving Related Incidents in Ontario

### Foreword:

The primary goal of this Ontario Underwater Council (OUC) report is to **prevent future scuba diving incidents**<sup>1</sup> by collecting, analyzing, and sharing information about past scuba diving incidents.

So as to ensure the greatest possible benefit to the Ontario Scuba Community, OUC's goal is to share the information on fatalities in Ontario as collected and any recommendations on OUC's website at:

<http://www.underwatercouncil.com/?action=cms&cmspage=safety>  
within 72 hours.

Recommendations are not intended to be a comment or conclusion on the cause or causes of the specific incident.

With regards to "Near Misses", the OUC reserves the right to select incidents for publication.

### Disclaimer:

No claim is made by the OUC, the Director of Sport Safety or by any contributors, as to the completeness or accuracy of information contained within this report. Every effort has been taken to include only respected sources in the public domain, however it must be stated that none of these have been independently verified or investigated.

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.

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<sup>1</sup> Incidents are divided into 2 categories, "Fatalities" and "Near Misses"



## **SECTION A: Fatalities - Summaries & Recommendations**

**Fatalities - Summaries and Recommendations are listed in chronological order.**



***Date of Incident:*** 2008-06-11

### **Summary:**

Major (ret'd) Christian Noel de Tilly, late of the Royal 22e Régiment died while diving in the Ottawa River near his home in Treadwell (near Plantagenet) on June 11. He was attempting to recover his pickup truck, which had sunk in the river. His body was recovered on June 13th. There will be an autopsy. Funeral service will be held in Treadwell on Saturday June 21st, at 14h.

There are no official facts at this time. This incident will be updated as more information becomes available.

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

### **OUC Recommendations:**

- *Do not dive solo.*
- *Do not attempt salvage without proper training. Salvage operations in Ontario must be performed by commercial divers.*
- *When performing tasks underwater it is very important to watch you air consumption.*



**Date of Incident:** 2008-07-13

**Summary:**

53 year old Craig Whitehouse, of Niagara on the Lake, died while diving in Tobermory this past weekend. Craig was apparently a very experienced technical diver who was highly regarded in his group.

Apparently Craig was diving solo, on technical equipment (a rebreather). The dive was planned to depths of 200 feet or more.

Craig surfaced at some distance from the boat. The boat was unable to move to expedite the rescue due to other divers doing deco/safety stops on the anchor line.

Craig received CPR but was pronounced dead a short time later. The coroner has reported the cause of death as massive air embolism.

The coroner is still investigating the equipment and will make other information available as appropriate.

Details to be confirmed as more information becomes available.

***For public domain information of this incident, please refer to Section C, Appendix #2 of this document.***

**OUC Recommendations:**

- *Insufficient information to be able to make any recommendations at this time.*
- *Once more facts are known, OUC would appreciate representatives from Ontario's growing Technical Diving community contacting us to help ensure any recommendations drafted are relevant and applicable.*



***Date of Incident:*** 2008-08-20

**Summary:**

40 year old Serge Trottier, of Gatineau QC, died while diving in Brockville at about 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday.

"The cause of death is drowning" said Leeds County Ontario Provincial Police Const. Wayne Scott said in an interview today.

He died after his diving partner noticed he was having problems with his regulator shortly after descending into the water.

All of the man's diving equipment had been seized for examination by authorities to determine if it was faulty.

"We have his equipment here," said Scott. "It's still premature and it's still under investigation."

Serge received CPR but was pronounced dead a short time later.

***For public domain information of this incident, please refer to Section C, Appendix #4 of this document.***

**OUC Recommendations:**

- *Ensure your equipment is serviced regularly.*



***Date of Incident:*** 2008-mm-dd

**Summary:**

TBD

***For public domain information of this incident, please refer to Section C, Appendix #3 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](mailto:ouc.safety@underwatercouncil.com) with all relevant details.



***Date of Incident:*** 2008-mm-dd

**Summary:**

TBD.

**OUC Recommendations:**

- *Recommendation 1*
- *Recommendation 2*



## **SECTION C: Appendices**



# Appendix #1

## Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality of 2008-06-11:

Found on Ontario Diving Forum <http://www.ontariodiving.com/showthread.php?t=8864>

**Diver death - Ontario Diving - Mozilla Firefox**

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

http://www.ontariodiving.com/showthread.php?t=8864

RBC - Online Banking Skate Magic PADI Member OUC Sitewarehouse ECCnet eSnipe eMessenger cloak surfing LinkedIn HP EI Reporting 8112

Yesterday, 08:38 PM #4

**David H**  
Ice Shark

Join Date: Jan 2005  
Location: Mississauga  
Posts: 1,618

Can anyone translate?

"It is impossible to obtain a conviction for sodomy from an English jury. Half of them don't believe that it can physically be done, and the other half are doing it."  
Winston Churchill

Quote

Yesterday, 08:39 PM #5

**Tom Falardeau**  
Was ist Das?

Join Date: Oct 2004  
Location: Ottawa  
Posts: 892

Thanks Adrian - it confirms what I've been told today.

Repose en paix, Christian.

Edit: brief translation of the essentials  
Major (retd) Christian Noel de Tilly, late of the Royal 22e Régiment died diving the Ottawa River near his home in Treadwell (near Plantagenet) on June 11. He was searching for his pickup truck, which had sunk in the river. His body was recovered on June 13th. There will be an autopsy. Funeral service will be held in Treadwell on Saturday June 21st, at 14h. Members of the CF attending should wear order of dress #1.

The rest of the details concern funeral and memorial arrangements, are of concern to the regimental family only and thus need no translation as those concerned speak French. Further details will be published on June 18th. I will post anything of relevance to the diving community as I get it.

You meet the nicest people on the internet.....

Quote

Yesterday, 09:08 PM #6

**robertlemire**  
FearlessBob!

Quote:  
Originally Posted by **David H**

Done

Diver death - Ontario Diving - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

http://www.ontariodiving.com/showthread.php?t=8864

RBC - Online Banking Skate Magic PADI Member OUC Sitewarehouse ECCnet eSnipe eMessenger doak surfing LinkedIn HP EI Reporting 8112

**robertlemire**  
FearlessBob!



Join Date: Dec 2006  
Location: Oakville, ON  
Posts: 163

Quote:

Originally Posted by **David H**  
*Can anyone translate?*

Yes, here's my own personal translation, hope this helps:

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is with regret that we have to tell you that Christian has passed away during a dive he was doing in the Ottawa River near his place on Wednesday June 11, 2008.
2. Marie-France was notified on Friday night June 13, 2008 that Christian's body was recovered from the Ottawa River near the location where he had dived in an effort to locate his submerged truck. Little details concerning the circumstances of the death have been supplied. An autopsy will be performed shortly. We believe that Christian's remains will be handed to Marie-France on Monday or Tuesday.
3. Conforming with the wishes of our regretted comrade Christian, his remains will not be shown and he will be cremated before the funeral. Marie-France's wishes are as follows:
  - a. The funeral service will be held at their parish's chapel in Treadwell on Saturday June 21, 2008 around 2 PM (to be confirmed). Marie-France will be at the door of the chapel around 1 PM to receive condolences.
  - b. A reception will immediately follow the funeral service, in the parish's community hall. All are invited.
  - c. The burial will be held later in Ste-Foy in Marie-France's cemetery plot. No date has been established yet for this ceremony.
  - d. Marie-France and Christian's mother would appreciate that should military personnel attend the funeral, at least a number of them should wear the UED 1A uniform. In order to have a celebration worthy of Christian's image, they still expect that you wear comfortable clothes, but suit and tie are not mandatory for men.
  - e. Since there will be no showing, Marie-France would prefer not to receive flowers. She instead suggest masses or donations to the Fondation du Général Vanier to honor Christian's memory.
4. For the religious service, we will need a volunteer to say a short eulogy for Christian. The association of the Royal 22nd Regiment Ottawa-Hull section already offered its support. When Marie-France will have finalized all arrangements, we will let you know.
5. The next message should be broadcast on Wednesday June 18, 2008.

I remember.

Major Réal Boissonnault  
and  
Capt L.G.G.S. (Serge) Thibodeau

Robert

Done



## Appendix #2

### Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality of 2008-07-13:

from link found at: [http://www.98thebeach.ca/news\\_item.php?NewsID=4966](http://www.98thebeach.ca/news_item.php?NewsID=4966)

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Monday, July 14, 2008

## Diver Dead

Tobermory

by Manny Paiva

A 53 year old man is dead while diving at Tobermory.

Bruce Peninsula OPP were called to the diving destination in Northern Bruce Peninsula around 10:40 yesterday morning.

Police say the diver -- who was operating off a dive boat -- surfaced in medical distress.

CPR was administered but the man was pronounced dead a short time later.

The man has been identified as Craig Whitehouse of Niagara on the Lake.

The Canadian Coast Guard and Parks Canada personnel were called to assist.

A post mortem will be done today at the Owen Sound hospital to determine the exact cause of death

From link found at <http://www.owensoundsuntimes.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=1114283>

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## Experienced Diver Dies In Tobermory;

Posted By **THE SUN TIMES**

*Posted 7 hours ago*

A 53-year-old diver who surfaced in the waters around Tobermory in a state of medical distress died Saturday despite attempts to save him.

Police say Craig Whitehouse of Niagara-on-the-Lake was an experienced diver and was part of a large group of people who chartered a dive boat on the weekend.

At the time of the incident, Whitehouse was diving alone, away from the main group, which was working with a dive master. The boat was anchored in 35 feet of water.

"He was off on his own, away from the group that was getting instruction from the dive master," said Staff Sgt. Brad Fishleigh of the Bruce Peninsula OPP.

"He was very experienced and they weren't in very much water at the time."

The cause of death is under investigation by the police, coast guard and Fathom Five National Marine Park officials. The man received CPR but was pronounced dead a short time later.



From a link found on OntarioDiving at <http://www.ontariodiving.com/showthread.php?t=9132>

Diver Fatality in Tobermory, Sunday, July 13th, 2008 - Page 2 - Ontario Diving - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

http://www.ontariodiving.com/showthread.php?t=9132&page=2

RBC - Online Banking Skate Magic PADI Member OUC Sitewarehouse ECCnet GoToMyPC eSnipe eMessenger cloak surfing LinkedIn HP

**Jennifer**  
Always learning.



Join Date: Apr 2005  
Location: St. Catharines  
Posts: 424

Owen paper is wrong....it happened on Sunday morning and the depth is not right. He was diving on Dufferins wall.

Below was a letter sent out by Matt from Dan's Dive Shop. Anyone who knew Craig is missing a true friend right now. Anyone who ever had the honor of meeting him would remember his smile, his dedication and most of all his sincerity. He was one of the first people that new divers would dive with on Wednesday night dives, and he was the first person to extend a hand in friendship and in help to those that needed it. We got together as a group last night to talk about some of the stories that each of us had, and to comfort each other including those that were there that day and close to him. I extend my deepest condolences to his wife, family and friends. Craig was an excellent diver, and this whole thing does not make any sense at this time. Please refrain from jumping to any conclusions on this sensitive matter.

"Subject: Sad News

Dear Fellow Divers,

It is with great remorse that I have to send you this email. It is difficult for me to type this..

As many of you know our annual Tobermory dive weekend was this past weekend. We had a great trip with 22 divers aboard for boat diving Saturday and Sunday. We returned back to port on Sunday with only 21, as we lost one of own, Craig Whitehouse, who had a sudden problem on the dive and surfaced from depths of over 200' and passed away very suddenly.

Craig was the most unique person I've ever met and I know most of you feel the same. He was loved and respected by all in his life. He has seen and done a lot of wonderful things and lived a very extreme and very action packed life here on earth.

Craig was a lot of things to a lot of us, he was a husband, teacher, mentor, father, brother, travel companion, dive buddy, Mc Guyver, Mr. Wizard to name a few.

Craig was a true person who loved life and lived it to the fullest. He was a true friend and an inspiration to us all.

Funeral Plans are being made, donations to Craig and Deb's church are being collected and we are diving Wednesday (tomorrow) in honour of Craig. I will be heading up the dive and really hope that all of you can make it to pay tribute to Craig. 6:30pm at the Stanley Ave Bridge in Chippawa.

Yours in diving,

Matt Mandziuk"

Done



From a link found at <http://www.stcatharinesstandard.ca/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=1121732>

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## Scuba diver was group's 'unofficial' leader

Wife fondly remembers her soulmate, who died diving at Tobermory

Posted By TIFFANY MAYER STANDARD STAFF

Debbie Whitehouse called him her soulmate.

She also referred to her husband, Craig, as Mr. Wizard because he was someone who friends and family say could do anything.

"If the world really was flat, Craig, my soulmate and the love of my life, would have been working on a means to turn it perpendicular to the universe so he could live on the edge," she said in her husband's eulogy Thursday.

Craig Whitehouse died Sunday while scuba diving at Dufferin's Wall in Tobermory, a popular spot that boasts deep water and the remains of many shipwrecks.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake resident was 53.

Matthew Mandziuk, who taught Whitehouse to dive five years ago, said details surrounding his death aren't known. The experienced diver's equipment is being tested and police are investigating.

But Thursday evening as friends and family gathered at the Little Red Rooster restaurant in Niagara-on-the-Lake, most of the dozens who came together were remembering and celebrating Whitehouse's life rather than ruminating about what went wrong.

Mandziuk was with Whitehouse when he died. He and fellow divers Terry and Christine Davidson, who were also in Tobermory with them, said he was always there for them, every Wednesday night, when the club from Dan's Dive Shop met for their weekly immersions into the region's rivers, quarries, lakes or the Brock pool.

He was the group's "unofficial" dive leader, Christine Davidson said. Unofficial because Whitehouse refused to take credit or be the centre of attention, even when he deserved it, friends said.

At those dive nights, he would be anyone's dive buddy and especially their mentor.

"We referred to him as Mother Craig," said diving friend Brian Buchanan. "He was the dad. We were the kids."



## Appendix #3

### Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality of 2008-08-20:

from link found at: <http://www.recorder.ca/PrintArticle.aspx?e=1166310>

Brockville Recorder and Times

<http://www.recorder.ca/PrintArticle.aspx?e=1166310>



[» Back](#)

### Man dies diving near city island

Updated 1 day ago

A 40-year-old man from Gatineau, Que., died Wednesday evening in a diving related incident on the St. Lawrence River west of Brockville.

Leeds County OPP Const. Wayne Scott of the Brockville detachment said the victim died about 6:30 p.m. after a dive with a partner near Sparrow Island.

Scott said the dive partner noticed the victim was having problems with his regulator shortly after descending into the water and brought him to the surface.

He said CPR was performed on the victim after he was pulled from the water. The man was transported by ambulance to Brockville General Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

A post-mortem was scheduled this morning at Kingston General Hospital to determine the cause of death, said Scott.

He said the name of the victim won't be released until after the post-mortem procedure.

Scott said all diving equipment has been seized for expert examination to determine if it was faulty.

The investigation is continuing, led by officers Const. Mike Benn and Det.-Const. Mike Larouche from the Leeds County detachment.

Brockville Police Deputy Chief Adrian Geraghty said city officers assisted in the investigation but noted it is an OPP investigation.

This is the second death of a Gatineau man in this area since Sunday.

On Monday morning near Ivy Lea, an OPP dive team from Orillia recovered the body of 46-year-old Sylvain Lamarche, who was reported missing the previous afternoon.

Gauthier had been attempting to swim from one boat to another about 100 feet apart but failed to reach his destination.

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from link found at: <http://www.recorder.ca/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=1168884>

Brockville Recorder and Times

<http://www.recorder.ca/PrintArticle.aspx?e=1168884>



[← Back](#)

## Post-mortem confirms diver's death as drowning

Posted 7 hours ago

A 40-year-old diver from Gatineau, Quebec drowned while diving near Sparrow Island on the St. Lawrence River on Wednesday.

"The cause of death is drowning" said Leeds County Ontario Provincial Police Const. Wayne Scott said in an interview today.

Serge Trottier died Wednesday at about 6:30 p.m. while diving at the popular shipwreck site west of Brockville.

A post-mortem was conducted at Kingston General Hospital Thursday to determine the cause of death.

He died after his diving partner noticed he was having problems with his regulator shortly after descending into the water.

All of the man's diving equipment had been seized for examination by authorities to determine if it was faulty.

"We have his equipment here," said Scott. "It's still premature and it's still under investigation."

Trottier's was the second death of a Gatineau man in the area since Sunday.

On Monday morning near Ivy Lea, an OPP dive team from Orillia recovered the body of 46-year-old Sylvain Demanche, who was reported missing the previous afternoon.

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## **Appendix #4**

### **Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality of 2008-mm-dd:**