



Ontario Underwater Council
www.underwatercouncil.com

2014 Report
on
Scuba Diving Incidents in Ontario, and
Recommendations to Prevent Recurrence

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Document Control

Date	Description of Change	By Whom
July 1, 2014	Incident – Brockville, Ontario	Ayisha Hassanali, Stephen Weir

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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

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Ontario Underwater Council

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

Goals:

The goals of this report are to:

- **Inform** readers about Scuba Diving incidents that have occurred in 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 in Ontario, thus helping make the sport more safe and enjoyable.
- **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, analyze, and learn from 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) Member scuba divers and Member Organizations (Clubs, Charter Operators, Retailers, etc.)
- Not-yet OUC Member scuba divers and Member Organizations (Clubs, Charter Operators, Retailers, etc.)
- Scuba Certification Agencies (e.g. ACUC, PADI, NAUI, BSAC, etc.)
- Scuba Safety Organizations (e.g. Divers Alert Network) that provide services in Ontario
- Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Office of the Chief Coroner (Dr. Andrew McCallum at time of publication)
- Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport
- 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 following are *in* scope of this report:

- Only scuba diving incidents that OUC has learned about independently and those that have been brought to OUC's attention by outside parties.
- Only scuba diving incidents that have occurred in Ontario, and in the case of dives in waters that share boundaries with other provinces or states, those dives that had both their planned entrance and exit points inside Ontario boundaries
- 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
- Scuba diving incidents that occur outside of Ontario or that have their planned entry and exit points outside Ontario.
- 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 (what people **should not** do).
- 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.

Trauma / Grief Counselling Services:

Often people can be psychologically and/or physiologically impacted by a scuba diving incident. These people can include (but are not limited to) fellow divers, family, rescuers, witnesses, survivors, and friends. OUC can provide information about Trauma / Grief Counselling Services upon request.

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:* 2014-07-01**

Summary:

There was a fatal accident near Brockville on Tuesday July 1st, 2014 at around 2 PM. The victim, Luciana Perri of Mississauga, 48 years old, was on her second dive of the day with her husband Stephen Long and another couple. Ms Perri had recently completed her Advanced Open Water certification and 4 dives in a drysuit. The four were diving from a commercial charter boat on the shipwreck of the Henry C. Daryaw, a steel propeller freighter lying just less than one hundred feet deep in a swift current. There is a line leading from the buoy for divers to pull themselves down and across to the Daryaw. There are also lines around the wreck to assist with moving across the current.

Ms Perri and her husband were at a depth of about 85 to 90 feet when she started to signal erratically to her husband and appeared to be distressed. Mr. Long then looked into the victim's eyes and she had become unresponsive. Mr. Long started to bring the victim up to the surface and was assisted in getting Ms Perri onto the boat. He removed her SCUBA gear in order to get her onto the boat and released it. Ms Perri was found to not have a pulse and CPR was commenced on the deck of the boat. The U.S. Coast Guard transported the victim to the shore at Hudson Point Road, where she was met by the Leeds Emergency Medical Services. Ms Perri was rushed to Brockville General Hospital, where she was pronounced dead.

The Marine Unit had searched a number of times for Ms Perri's gear. Ms Perri's BCD (Buoyancy Compensator Device), tank and regulator were recovered at a depth of about 70 feet on the south wall past the wreck by divers on another charter boat. The OPP Marine Unit was searching in the area and was right there to recover the gear as it was pulled out of the water.

An autopsy was performed on Ms Perri and the cause of death was determined to be "consistent with drowning", according to Staff Sergeant Cary Churchill of the Leeds County OPP. A number of vials of blood were taken, and the results had not been received at the time of printing. The victim's gear was in the process of being catalogued and the equipment and contents of the tank were about to be examined and tested. The Ontario Underwater Council will endeavour to find out the results of the various tests.

OUC Recommendations to Prevent Recurrence Pending Further Investigation:

- 1. Inflate a victim's BCD at the surface if possible*
- 2. Always secure a victim's equipment or have someone responsible secure it in order to immediately turn it over to the police*

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



Date of Incident: 2014-mm-dd

Summary:

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

OUC Recommendations to Prevent Reoccurrence:



Date of Incident: 2014-mm-dd

Summary:

For public domain information of this incident, please refer to Section C, Appendix #3 of this document.

OUC Recommendations to Prevent Recurrence:



Date of Incident: 2014-mm-dd

Summary:

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

OUC Recommendations to Prevent Recurrence:



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: 2014-mm-dd

Summary:

TBD

OUC Recommendations:

- *Recommendation 1*
- *Recommendation 2*



SECTION C: Appendices

Appendix #1

Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality of 2014-07-01:

<http://www.recorder.ca/2014/07/01/woman-49-dies-in-dive-tragedy>

UPDATE: Dive victim 'in distress'

By [Ronald Zajac](#), Recorder and Times

Wednesday, July 2, 2014 5:02:59 EDT PM

A 49-year-old diver who died on Canada Day was in visible distress in the St. Lawrence River before her husband brought her back to the surface, police said.

Luciane Perri, of Mississauga, was attempting to explore the wreck of the Henry C. Daryaw, located west of the Brockville Narrows opposite the Long Beach area at the time of the incident.

Police were still trying yesterday to piece together what went tragically wrong.

“The couple had completed a dive in the morning with the same equipment with no issues,” said Staff-Sgt. Cary Churchill, of the Ontario Provincial Police’s Leeds County detachment.

Perri also had no apparent medical issues, he added.

Sometime before 2 p.m., the victim was about 85 or 90 feet underwater when the trouble began.

“The victim was having issues communicating with her husband,” said Churchill, referring to the standard hand-signals. “She looked like she was in some distress.”

Her husband and dive partner, Stephen Long, brought her back to the surface as quickly as possible – careful to avoid decompression sickness – said Churchill.

“When they got to the surface, she was unresponsive,” added the sergeant.

“They got her onto the deck of the dive vessel and they began CPR.”

A U.S. Coast Guard vessel brought the victim to shore at Hudson Point Road, where paramedics took over and rushed her to Brockville General Hospital.

Perri was pronounced dead at the hospital, said Churchill.

A post-mortem operation on the victim’s remains was “pending” as of Wednesday morning, said the sergeant.

An OPP master diver was expected here from Orillia. Protocol requires the master diver to be present at the post-mortem and the officer will also inspect the equipment, he added.

According to the organization Save Ontario Shipwrecks, the Henry C. Daryaw was a steel freighter that missed the turn in the shipping channel in a fog and sank on November 21, 1941.

Helen Cooper, owner of the dive charter Abucs scubA and the Dive Brockville Adventure Centre shop, said the tragedy happened on her charter.

The husband and wife, who were both experienced divers, were part of a four-person group of divers and Perri did not appear to have any health issues, said Cooper.

“Everything was fine. She had a great first dive. She had a way longer than usual surface interval,” said Cooper.

Still, Cooper ran tests on all the equipment on her vessel, the Helen C., and found nothing wrong, she said. Perri was using her own dive equipment.



“I think it indicates to medical issues, but obviously only the coroner can find out,” said Cooper. The tragedy hit a day after Cooper ran a memorial charter for Ronald Brow, another diver who died in that area a year ago, of a heart attack, during one of her charters, said Cooper.



Abucs scuba on Monday ran a memorial charter to place this plaque, in memory of a diver who died a year earlier, near the wreck of the Henry C. Daryaw. (Submitted photo)

This is the fourth fatality to occur in relation to one of Cooper’s charters in her 20 years in business, she said, adding fatalities remain a rare occurrence.

Of the three others, two were medical in nature while the other, which claimed her own husband, Dave, nearly 14 years ago, was an accident.

None of the fatalities involved equipment problems, said Cooper.

(An earlier version of this story incorrectly located the scene of the fatality in the Brockville Narrows.)

RIVER TRAGEDIES

Tuesday’s diving fatality in the St. Lawrence River hit just over a year after another diver died in the area.

Ronald Brow, 58, of York, Ont., died June 30, 2013, after a diving incident near Hudson Point Road.

Also, in April 2013, retired Brockville teacher Tom Stretton collapsed after scuba diving of the shore in Cardinal.

<http://www.recorder.ca/2014/07/03/plea-for-lost-dive-gear>

Plea for lost dive gear

By [Ronald Zajac](#), Recorder and Times

Thursday, July 3, 2014 3:57:06 EDT PM



Luciana Perri is seen on a dive boat earlier this year in this photo provided by her husband.
(SUBMITTED PHOTO)

The grieving husband of a 48-year-old diving mishap victim is urging anyone along the St. Lawrence River to be on the lookout for her lost equipment.

Steve Long is hoping the lost dive gear might help investigators shed some light on what went tragically wrong during a Canada Day diving trip west of Brockville.

Luciana Perri, of Mississauga, was attempting to explore the wreck of the Henry C. Daryaw, located west of the Brockville Narrows opposite the Long Beach area, on Tuesday afternoon when she became unresponsive.

A post-mortem examination took place in Ottawa on Wednesday.

“The preliminary results are indicating that her death was consistent with drowning,” said Ontario Provincial Police Sgt. Kristine Rae.

Sometime before 2 p.m. on Canada Day, the victim was about 85 or 90 feet underwater when she became visibly distressed, according to police.

Long, her husband and dive partner, brought her back to the surface, but attempts to revive her on the dive vessel were unsuccessful.

During these efforts, Long removed a buoyancy compensator, which looks like an inflatable life jacket, as well as her air tank and breathing regulators.

“The breathing regulators are attached to the tank and the tank is attached to the vest,” said Long.

All of it was removed at the boat and left in the water and could still be floating out there, said Long.

Investigators need the air tank back in order to test the air, to see if this factored into the accident, he added.

While a diver would know what to do with the equipment if found, Long is concerned it might be discovered by someone who may be unfamiliar with it.

“It’s kind of like evidence that we don’t want to have tampered with,” he said.

He does not remember how much air may have been left in the vest when he took it off. If there is air, it likely floated away, whereas it probably sank to the wreck if the air was let out.

Long is urging anyone who comes across the missing gear to do nothing with it but turn it over immediately to police.

The Ontario Provincial Police dive team from Gravenhurst was at the scene of the tragedy Thursday looking for the missing equipment, said Rae. Their search remained fruitless as of mid-afternoon.

While the post-mortem indicates Perri died by drowning rather than a medical issue, it would be wrong, at this stage, to conclude the drowning was caused by equipment failure, said Rae.

“We’d have to recover the equipment to say that,” she said.



Long, 50, who has been diving for 13 years, said his wife, like himself, was a certified second-level or advanced diver.

While all divers are fundamentally aware of the sport's risks, the Canada Day dive was to be in preparation for another diving trip and should have been "a walk in the park," said Long.

"I simply don't know what happened," said Long.

"I'm searching for answers here."

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/thestar/obituary.aspx?pid=171601665>

LUCIANA PERRI

Obituary



LUCIANA PERRI

It is with great sadness we announce the passing of Luciana Maria Perri on Tuesday, July 1, 2014 at the age of 48. Beloved wife of Steve. Much loved daughter of Luigi and Ellen Perri and daughter-in-law of Evelyn and the late Philip Long. Cherished sister of Teresa Perri (Mitch Ma) and sister-in law of Jason Long (Maryann) and Matthew Long. Luciana will be lovingly remembered by her many friends and colleagues. Friends may call at the Turner & Porter "Neweduk-Erin Mills" Chapel, 1981 Dundas St. W., Mississauga (just east of Erin Mills Pkwy.), from 2-4 p.m. Sunday, followed by a Prayer Service at 4 p.m. If desired, donations to

the

[Canadian Cancer Society](#)

would be appreciated. Online condolences may be made through www.turnerporter.ca

Other related links:

Scubaboard Thread:

<http://www.scubaboard.com/forums/accidents-incidents/486500-dive-accident-near-brockville-july-1st-2014-a.html>



Appendix #2

Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality following incident of 2014-mm-dd:

Other related links:



Appendix #3

Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality following incident of 2014-mm-dd:

Other related links:



Appendix #4

Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality following incident of 2014-mm-dd:

Other related links: