

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE INFORMATION ON INCIDENT REVIEW

Introduction:

This review is focused on the circumstances surrounding the death of an offender while in custody at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility (CNSCF) on March 6, 2012.

Consideration:

The review considered:

- The actions taken in response to the incident
- Whether all applicable policies and procedures were followed.
- If the appropriate policies and procedures are in place.

Issue:

The 25-year-old offender was found deceased in his cell during the morning hours of March 6, 2012.

Facts:

- The offender was remanded and admitted to CNSCF on March 4, 2012 on charges related to smuggling a controlled substance into Canada under the Customs Act.
- Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) advised CNSCF that a controlled substance had been retrieved from the offender's bodily orifices and that the offender may still have a controlled substance within his body cavity.
- The offender was processed on admission and an assessment was completed. There was no evidence the offender was in medical distress and the offender denied there were any controlled substances within his body cavity.
- The offender was housed in a cell alone as per protocol.
- On March 5, 2012, the offender appeared in Dartmouth Provincial Court and was remanded back to CNSCF until March 17, 2012.
- The offender was assessed by Health Care and again denied having any controlled substances within his body cavity. The onsite nurse placed the offender on a 15 minute special watch and requested staff to monitor the offender's level of consciousness.
- The offender was housed in a health segregation cell alone as per protocol.
- Between March 5, 2012 at 6:40 p.m. and March 6, 2012 at 8:12 a.m., correctional officers on rounds observed the offender either awake or sleeping.
- At 8:28 a.m., correctional officers on rounds observed the offender lying on the floor and unresponsive.
- Within 44 seconds, the Correctional Services Emergency Response Team members arrived and attempted to resuscitate the offender. Emergency Health Services (EHS) and the Halifax Regional Police were immediately contacted.
- EHS paramedics arrived at the CNSCF within approximately 11 minutes and continued attempts to revive the offender.
- The offender was pronounced dead at 8:58 a.m. and next of kin notified.
- HRP arrived on site at approximately 9:30 a.m. to commence their investigation.

- The Nova Scotia Medical Examiner Service arrived at approximately 10:55 a.m. to commence its investigation.

Findings:

- Staff rounds while the offender was being held in Health segregation were conducted in compliance with policy and procedures.
- The officer in charge acted in compliance with policy and procedures for dealing with a crisis incident and met response requirements relating to the death or serious illness of an offender in custody.
- Staff responded quickly, provided necessary first aid and contacted appropriate emergency services (EHS, police, Medical Examiner Service).
- The Officer in Charge also acted in compliance with the “Post Incident Procedures.”
- No deficiencies in policy and procedures were identified while the offender was in health segregation.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS AS A RESULT OF THE REVIEW

- The Integrated Halifax Regional Police/RCMP Major Crime Unit conducted an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death and determined it was not suspicious in nature. The file has been closed.
- The Nova Scotia Medical Examiner Services completed its investigation and ruled the death accidental due to intoxication by a controlled substance.