



Ontario Underwater Council  
[www.underwatercouncil.com](http://www.underwatercouncil.com)

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

**Compiled by:**  
**David Noble** *Director, Sport Safety*



# Document Control

Date	Description of Change	By Whom
June 13, 2011	Created document	Dave Noble
June 13, 2011	Near Miss - student	Dave Noble
June 27, 2011	Incident – Kirkfield Quarry	Dave Noble
July 7, 2011	Update to Kirkfield incident / removed Point Traverse incident as not a diving incident	Dave Noble
July 17, 2011	Update to Kirkfield incident	Dave Noble
Aug 3, 2011	Incident – Tobermory July 31, 2011	Dave Noble
Aug 12, 2011	Updates	Dave Noble
Sep 12, 2011	Incident – St Clair River	Dave Noble
Oct 25, 2011	Incident – Haines Lake	Dave Noble
Nov 14, 2011	Updates - Sarnia	Dave Noble
Nov 25, 2011	Haines Lake – removed, Recommendations updated - all	Dave Noble
Nov. 26, 2011	Updated to reflect outcomes of Meeting of Nov 24 <sup>th</sup>	Raimund Krob
Nov 28, 2011	Cleaned up formatting turned over to new Safety Coordinator	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)



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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:

- **Educate** (inform) readers on 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 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.
- **Keep** premiums for OUC's Liability Insurance Policy for Scuba Organizations as affordable as possible.

### 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.
- 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](http://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](mailto:ouc.safety@underwatercouncil.com) AND
  - OUC's Scuba Incident & Prevention Report Coordinator at:
    - [ouc.reports@underwatercouncil.com](mailto: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:** 2011-06-10

## **Summary:**

OUC was informed in mid-June 2011 of what initially appeared to be a scuba-related incident near Point Traverse.

Investigation revealed however that this was not a scuba-related incident as originally believed.

Accordingly OUC removed the preliminary report and recommendations from this document.

OUC:

- Commits to publishing Incident Reports as soon as possible after being notified of the incident.
- Obtains and receives information from many independent sources, including survivors, witnesses, police, provincial coroners' offices, etc.
- Makes every effort to validate information obtained / provided
- Makes every effort to publish only respected public domain sources in its incident appendices
- May receive information from various levels of government and policing agencies that OUC is NOT permitted to publish
- Reserves the right to change its documentation, including recommendations, at any time and without notice, as new information becomes known.
- Makes every effort to ensure that recommendations made are:
  - relevant (that if followed, would have prevented the incident)
  - impartial (that do not seek to lay blame, but rather seek to prevent recurrence)
  - reasonable (that can be implemented without undue effort)

In some cases it is inappropriate for OUC to publish the non-diving related information it receives.

In this case the OUC was informed of additional information which caused the removal of the incident.

We apologize for the earlier posting and ask for the dive community to stand with the family and friends of the deceased and give them the support they need in this time of grieving.

## **OUC Recommendations:**

*n/a*





**Date of Incident:** 2011-06-26

## **Summary:**

A fatal accident occurred at approximately 12:25pm on Sunday. Ilya Klebanov, a 49 year old male diver, passed away in a scuba training incident.

A number of scuba groups, incorporating approximately 50 to 70 divers, were diving at Kirkfield Quarry on this day.

One of the training facilities was conducting an SDI Solo Diving Course when Ilya was noticed floating face-down at the surface of the lake at around 12:25 p.m.

His instructor and a buddy from the training facility, and several members of a Toronto based dive club responded. There was some confusion for a few moments as to whether this was a drill or an actual rescue.

Within seconds of being brought to shore the patient was put on 100% Oxygen, with AED until EMS arrived. At no time did the AED recommend shocking. An OUC club responded in water, supplied both the Oxygen and AED equipment and co-ordinated most of the rescue logistics on shore. CPR was continued until EMS took over.

It was approximately 12:27 when the victim arrived on shore. EMS arrived at approximately 12:55pm, and the rescue teams worked with EMS until 1:13pm, at which point they received permission via radio to discontinue assistance.

The victim was unable to be revived.

The Coroner's office is still awaiting pathology results.

*This report will be updated when details are available / confirmed.*

## **Public References:**

<http://www.scubaboard.com/forums/accidents-incidents/387292-death-kirkfeild-today.html>

<http://ontariodiving.com/showthread.php?14377-Divers-Death.&p=150486>

## **OUC Recommendations:**

OUC highly recommends that organized groups and commercial dive organizations (charters, etc.) have an O2 kit and an AED available for **immediate** use by **trained** personnel.



*Date of Incident:* 2011-07-31

### **Summary:**

A fatal accident occurred at approximately 3:00pm on Sunday. Dr. Jan Raczycki, a 49 year old male diver, passed away during a dive on the wreck of the James C. King at Russell Island in Tobermory.

The victim was unable to be revived.

We are awaiting further information from the Coroner's office.

*This report will be updated when details are available / confirmed.*

### **Public References:**

<http://www.scubaboard.com/forums/accidents-incidents/391303-diver-dead-tobermory-lake-huron.html>

[http://www.bayshorebroadcasting.ca/news\\_item.php?NewsID=37379](http://www.bayshorebroadcasting.ca/news_item.php?NewsID=37379)

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/thestar/obituary.aspx?n=jan-mieczyslaw-raczycki&pid=152853990>

### **OUC Recommendations:**

*Divers should review their fitness to dive annually, 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.*

*OUC highly recommends that organized groups and commercial dive organizations (charters, etc.) have an O2 kit and an AED available for **immediate** use by **trained** personnel.*



**Date of Incident:** 2011-09-12

### **Summary:**

48-year-old Wilnelmus Bardoel from Ingersoll went missing in the St. Clair River and failed to resurface on Monday while scuba diving with two other people near the Bluewater Bridge.

After a six day search, the body was found Sunday morning, at around 9:00am near the Bluewater Bridge in Sarnia. The body was found about 100 meters from shore by sailors from Port Huron

At around 9 a.m. Lambton County OPP and Point Edward firefighters recovered the body of Wilnelmus Bardoel, 48, of Ingersoll from the St. Clair River south of the Bluewater Bridge.

We are awaiting further information from the Coroner's office.

*This report will be updated when details are available / confirmed.*

### **Public References:**

See Appendix #1 for news article references.

### **OUC Recommendations:**

*Do not dive without a buddy.*

*Stay together in buddy teams. Special care must be taken when diving in odd numbers.*

*All buddies should return to the surface together.*



**Date of Incident:** 2011-10-25

## **Summary:**

OUC was informed on October 28, 2011 of what initially appeared to be a scuba-related incident in Haines Lake near Parry Sound.

Investigation revealed however that this was not a scuba-related incident as originally believed.

Accordingly OUC has removed the preliminary report and recommendations from this document.

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- Makes every effort to validate information obtained / provided
- Makes every effort to publish only respected public domain sources in its incident appendices
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  - relevant (that if followed, would have prevented the incident)
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In some cases it is inappropriate for OUC to publish the non-diving related information it receives.

In this case the OUC was informed of additional information which caused the removal of the incident.

We apologize for the earlier posting and ask for the dive community to stand with the family and friends of the deceased and give them the support they need in this time of grieving.

## **OUC Recommendations:**

*n/a*



***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](mailto:ouc.safety@underwatercouncil.com) with all relevant details.



***Date of Incident:*** 2011-06-11 or 12

**Summary:**

A student, diving with a group from Quebec, was reportedly taken to emergency medical services in Brockville this weekend.

The student, diving with 2 instructors, apparently returned to the boat after an uneventful dive. He then reported feeling numbness and was given oxygen and taken into the dock in Brockville to meet EMS.

The student was reported to be in satisfactory condition. No information is available as to the diagnosis or treatment of the diver.

**OUC Recommendations:**

- *Recommendation 1*
- *Recommendation 2*



## **SECTION C: Appendices**





## Appendix #1

### Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality of 2011-09-12:



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## Search for missing Ingersoll man to continue

*Posted 1 day ago*

SARNIA –

The Lambton OPP reported the search would continue Thursday morning along the St. Clair River for 48-year-old Wilnelmus Bardoel from Ingersoll.

Bardoel failed to resurface on Monday while scuba diving with two other people near the Bluewater Bridge. The search has involved the OPP's underwater search and recovery unit, Lambton County OPP marine unit and both the Canadian and U.S. coast guards.

Since Monday, rescue teams from both sides of the border had been patrolling the area near the Blue Water Bridge and downriver after three recreational divers entered the waters, but only two surfaced. Bardoel was officially reported missing around 2:30 p.m. Monday.

"It's not uncommon for divers to get in trouble down there," said Jim Fedora, president of the Sarnia Underwater Club, noting the unpredictable waters in the area under the bridge. "Most people that get in trouble, usually have problems because of the current. It can range from six to 10 knots there, which is pretty severe."

The waters just south of the bridge –where the diving trio are believed to have entered – is a popular spot, attracting scuba enthusiasts from all over, said Fedora, pointing to two wrecks, the Monarch (an old tugboat) and a sunken barge.

"We've got quite a population of very experienced divers here in Sarnia; we consider it the base case of what we do here, because this is what we have ... but for people who haven't been around here, this is pretty advanced diving." Changing currents and poor visibility are the most common problems in the area, he said.

Earlier in the week, the search had extended downriver as far as Stag Island.

"We've never had a diver fatality from the current, that I'm aware of," said Fedora, noting that divers have died from health-related issues, like heart attacks.

In 2005, local broadcaster Mark Cartland died shortly after being pulled from the St. Clair due to heart failure. The 41-year-old had been scuba diving south of bridge, exploring the wreck of the Monarch.

Fedora said experienced divers shouldn't be deterred from continuing to the plunge under the bridge.

"I don't think there's any need to stop diving there."



# Diver's body recovered

The Windsor Star

September 19, 2011

## POINT EDWARD

After a six day search, the body of a Canadian diver was found Sunday morning near the Bluewater Bridge in Sarnia.

At around 9 a.m. Lambton County OPP and Point Edward firefighters recovered the body of Wilnelmus Bardoel, 48, of Ingersoll from the St. Clair River south of the Bluewater Bridge.

Bardoel disappeared last Monday around 2:45 p.m. during a recreational dive in the St. Clair River with three other scuba divers who surfaced a short while later.

Lambton County OPP, St. Clair County Sherriff's Department in Michigan, the U.S. Coast Guard and Point Edward Fire and Rescue all launched vessels last week on the St. Clair River to help with the search. A U.S. Coast Guard helicopter and a Canadian helicopter were also dispatched to the area.

A post-mortem examination is expected to take place at the London Health Sciences Centre today.



## Sailboat racers discover body in St. Clair River

BY CRYSTAL GARCIA  
PORT HURON TIMES-HERALD

8:08 AM, Sep. 19, 2011|

Local sailboat racers made a surprising discovery on their way to the starting line Sunday morning.

Jeff Seim, Carol Cadaldo and Sherri Marginet were on their boat Music Cal about 8 a.m. when they saw something floating in the water. Upon closer inspection, they learned it was a body.

"We were just heading out, ready to go sailing and we thought it was a balloon," Seim of Port Huron said. "We thought it was a hoax and then we got closer. It was quite dramatic."

They were headed up the Canadian shoreline about 100 yards from the shore when they discovered the body near a harbor south of the Blue Water Bridge, Seim said.

Canadian officials recovered an adult male body from the St. Clair River about 9 a.m., according to a news release from the Ontario Provincial Police.

Members of the Lambton County Ontario Provincial Police and Point Edward Fire and Rescue responded to the scene.

An autopsy is expected to take place today at the London Health Sciences, the news release stated.

Additional information will be released pending positive identification and family notification.

Rescue crews have been searching for a Canadian scuba diver missing since Monday afternoon from a dive in the St. Clair River.

Wilnelmus Bardoel, 48, of Ingersoll entered the river with two Canadian divers near the Blue Water Bridge and failed to resurface.

Numerous crews from the U.S. and Canada have aided in the effort.