

August 24, 2016

IIU concludes investigation into fatal motor vehicle collision on PTH 2

The Independent Investigation Unit of Manitoba (IIU) has completed its investigation into a police pursuit and traffic fatality near Ste. Claude, Manitoba and has concluded the officer acted appropriately.

On the night of October 9, 2015, two members of the RCMP Portage la Prairie detachment were investigating a report of an assault and possible impaired driver. They located a suspect van at the Petro Canada gas station in Ste. Claude, and pulled in behind the van. Before the police officers exited their marked vehicle, the van and its four occupants drove from the lot eastbound onto PTH2 at a very high rate of speed.

Police pursued the van but then terminated the pursuit within one minute due to the van's excessive speed, which approached 150 kilometers per hour. As the van continued to flee eastbound it passed a semi-trailer truck by moving into the oncoming westbound lane of traffic. The van collided head-on with a westbound car driven by a 20-year-old, lone female who was killed on impact.

As this incident involved a fatality, as well as serious injuries to occupants of the van, the IIU assumed responsibility for the investigation, as required by *The Police Services Act*.

Also as required under the Act, a civilian monitor was appointed by the Manitoba Police Commission. The IIU held monthly briefings with the civilian monitor throughout the course of its investigation.

IIU Civilian Director Zane Tessler received the investigative files, including data recordings from the police vehicle, video surveillance footage of the gas station and views of the highway, and expert reports from traffic accident scene analysts.

Tessler concluded the driver of the van was intent on fleeing from police and moved into oncoming traffic when it was unsafe to do so. He also concluded the officer driving the police vehicle was justified in beginning a pursuit and that he acted carefully and prudently during the course of the brief pursuit and in his decision to abort the chase.

The driver of the van was subsequently charged with numerous offences, including criminal negligence, dangerous and impaired driving, and flight from a police officer. As such, the IIU

will not comment further on this matter. The complete report of the civilian director will be posted online once the charges are dealt with by the Court.

The details of this investigation were first released on October 16, 2015.

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Media inquiries may be directed to:
Barbara Czech
Communications, Independent Investigation Unit
204-803-9644
bczech@mts.net