

Circumstances of Death

Family and friends had been enjoying the weekend at a cabin in the Mandanna Lake region south east of the community of Carmacks, Yukon. At just before 17:00hrs, Mr. Wheeler and a friend left the cabin area on snow mobiles and had gone a short distance along the lake shore. Each man was traveling on a separate snow machine. Mr. Wheeler led his friend up a hillside, performing a maneuver referred to as "high marking." High marking is described as a maneuver whereby the operator of the snow machine tries to ride as far up a steep slope as possible, then turns around and comes back down the hill without getting stuck, rolling the snowmobile, or losing power. The hillside was not fully covered in snow. Mr. Wheeler traveled up the hillside approximately 50-60 feet and began the turn to descend down the hill. The snow machine hit an obstacle, likely a boulder or a large log and flipped over. The snow machine, with Mr. Wheeler trapped underneath, slid to the bottom of the hill. When it was approximately 5 feet from the lake shore the machine fell over landing on its side in a willow stand. Mr. Wheeler was located face down with his feet pointing downhill. The companion that witnessed the accident immediately ran down the hill to where the body of Mr. Wheeler had come to rest. Mr. Wheeler was wearing appropriate winter weight snowmobile clothing including coveralls, snow mobile jacket, proper footwear, and leather gloves. Mr. Wheeler was not wearing a helmet at the time of the accident.

Significant Factors/Conclusions

Mr. Wheeler was not wearing a helmet and sustained fatal head injuries when the snow machine fell onto him. Section 216 (1) of the Motor Vehicles Act states, "No person shall operate a motor cycle or snowmobile unless they are wearing a safety helmet securely attached on their head."

Mr. Wheeler had a blood alcohol level of .28% which is consistent with a heavy level of intoxication. At this level of intoxication all mental, physical and sensory functions are severely impaired.

Recommendations

No recommendations


Signature, Chief Coroner

Whitehorse, Yukon

Province/Territory

April 7, 2014

Date

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