

June 14, 2021

Investigation into medical distress while in Airdrie RCMP custody

On June 7, the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) was directed to investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of a 35-year-old man who went into medical distress while in custody at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Airdrie detachment, and was subsequently pronounced deceased that same day in hospital.

On June 6, at about 1:40 p.m., Airdrie RCMP responded to a call for service in relation to an uttering threats incident. After a search, the 35-year-old man who was the subject of the call was located by RCMP members in a vehicle near the Airdrie Airport. The man was placed under arrest and a struggle ensued. During that struggle, the man was taken to the ground by police, sustaining what appeared to be minor injuries. Following the man's arrest, he was placed in the rear of a police vehicle and, while seated, he appeared to deliberately strike his head on the Plexiglas barrier between the front and rear seats. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) were contacted by the RCMP and requested to attend. EMS arrived on scene and assessed the man's injuries. Following that assessment, it was determined that the man would be transported to hospital for further assessment and treatment of his injuries. The man was examined at hospital and was released back into the custody of the RCMP, who transported him to the Airdrie detachment cells.

On June 7, at about 9:30 a.m., a Judicial Interim Release hearing was held for the man, who was remanded into custody. At 11:50 a.m., a check on the man revealed that he was exhibiting strange behaviour and appeared unwell. At 11:55 a.m., EMS were called to attend the Airdrie detachment cells as the man appeared to be in medical distress. Prior to the arrival of EMS, the man became unresponsive, and RCMP members performed first aid, administering Naloxone and performing CPR until the arrival of EMS, which assumed care of the man. EMS responders were able to briefly resuscitate the man, and he was transported to hospital. At about 1:31 p.m., the man was pronounced deceased.

An autopsy was conducted on June 10, which revealed no significant trauma to the man's body. Full results of the autopsy, including toxicology results, are pending and will be incorporated into the investigation. ASIRT's investigation will examine the actions of police during this incident in order to determine if those actions were lawful. As ASIRT's investigation is underway, no further information will be released at this time.

ASIRT's mandate is to effectively, independently and objectively investigate incidents involving Alberta's police that have resulted in serious injury or death to any person, as well as serious or sensitive allegations of police misconduct.

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Media inquiries may be directed to:

ASIRT media line
780-641-9099