

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE DEATH OF NEIL STONECHILD

- The body of Neil Stonechild was found in the north industrial area of Saskatoon in November 1990. The original investigation determined the cause of death was probable hypothermia.
- In February 2000, the bodies of Rodney Naistus and Lawrence Wegner were found in an industrial area of Saskatoon, near the Queen Elizabeth Power Station. The first investigation of these deaths determined that both had died of probable hypothermia.
- Also in February 2000, Darrell Night came forward and alleged that two Saskatoon Police Service officers picked him up, drove him outside the city and dropped him off in sub-zero weather to walk back to Saskatoon.
- The Minister of Justice, at the request of the Saskatoon Chief of Police, requested that the RCMP undertake an investigation into the circumstances leading to the deaths of Mr. Naistus and Mr. Wegner. The investigation was to include a full review of related allegations that members of the Saskatoon Police Service had engaged in the practice of transporting and abandoning individuals at the outskirts of the city.
- As a result, the RCMP investigation also included the circumstances leading to the deaths of Lloyd Dustyhorn in January 2000, Darcy Dean Ironchild in February 2000, and Neil Stonechild in November 1990.
- The investigation of the incident reported by Mr. Night resulted in the conviction of two Saskatoon Police Service officers for unlawful confinement.
- The investigations of the deaths of Mr. Dustyhorn, Mr. Ironchild and Mr. Naistus were concluded and it was determined that, based on the evidence, charges were not warranted. The Minister of Justice then ordered Coroner's Inquests into the three deaths. These inquests have been completed.
- The investigation of the death of Mr. Stonechild was concluded and it was determined that there is not sufficient evidence to lay charges. However, there was evidence that Mr. Stonechild had contact with members of the Saskatoon Police Service on the day he was last seen alive.
- On February 20, 2003, the Minister of Justice for Saskatchewan announced the appointment of the Honourable Mr. Justice D. H. Wright to conduct a Commission of Inquiry Into Matters Relating to the Death of Neil Stonechild.
- The purpose of the Inquiry is not to determine criminal or civil responsibility. Rather, its purpose is to conduct a public inquiry into the circumstances that resulted in the death of Mr. Stonechild, including the nature and extent of contact between Mr. Stonechild and members of the Saskatoon Police Service. The Commission is also to look into the way in which the 1990 investigation of Mr. Stonechild's death was conducted.
- Commissioner Wright has designated Mr. Joel A. Hesje of Saskatoon as Commission Counsel.
- The Commission is to deliver its final report and recommendations to the Saskatchewan Minister of Justice.