

**Event Type:** Fourth of July

**Incident:** Fall from surface

**Narrative**

On Friday, July 4, 2008, a group of high school students attended a Fourth of July event at an old quarry turned watering hole outside of St. Louis, MO. The location had been in operation for about 10 years. It was approximately 60 miles outside of St. Louis. The location had a reputation for allowing underage drinking. Over a period of 10 years there were 5 deaths. Gun violations, knifings, assault and battery, robbery, rape and more were associated with this location. The proprietor lived on property and employed 2 security guards/parking attendants. The primary concern of the security guards/parking attendants was to collect a \$10.00 per car admission charge. Fourth of July parties at this location had become legendary. It was considered a teenage rite of passage to attend --- of sorts.

Around 10:30 am on Friday, July 4, 2008, a group of friends arrived at the quarry for a day of partying. There were 5 passengers and 4 cases of ice cold beer in the trunk of their car. They checked in at the front entrance, paid their admission fee and parked. The security guard on duty at the front gate gave the vehicle the once over and let them in. They proceeded to unpack their vehicle and secured a spot to chill and drink on an embankment near the closest water filled quarry. After several hours of drinking, two of the friends decided to explore the grounds. They spotted a second larger quarry across the way. They searched for a way to access the second quarry. They found 2 separate trails. There was no posted signage concerning either trail. They decided to take what appeared to be the shorter route. About 50 steps in, the leading person fell and was hanging on to an overhang of grass and weeds. The route they selected was flat overgrowth (about 18" in width) near the leading edge of the quarry. The young man eventually fell; hitting his head on a 100'x50' pitched (18 degree inward facing angle) flat rock below. He fell approximately 25 ft. He slid down the rock in to the water below. His friend ran for help. He found the security guard/parking attendant and told him what happened. They went to retrieve the boat and it was gone. It took approximately 8-10 minutes to reach the young man. He was dead on scene. It was later determined that he died from drowning. The rescue boat was originally located 300 feet from the scene. The owner was out in the boat fishing. There was no first aid equipment in the boat or on property. There were no procedures in place. It took 45 minutes for emergency services to arrive.

**Problem statements**

- Considering the history of the location, was there adequate security? Explain...
- Were the emergency procedures in place adequate? What should have been done differently?
- What could you have done to address underage drinking? Do you think a less tolerant drinking environment could have prevented this incident? What should the local police have done?
- Were there adequate warning signs or signage in general on property? Could an instructional sign or warning sign have prevented this incident? Why or why not?
- Should the owner of the property brought in an outside consulting firm to inspect the property for potential hazards? Could this have prevented the incident?
- Would better maintenance helped prevent this from happening? Explain...
- How is it that a location has 5 deaths over 10 years and is still in business?
- Could have improved emergency procedures saved this young man's life? How?
- Should the owner of the property do anything for the family/friends of the deceased? What?
- Should this operation be allowed to continue to operate? Why or why not?