

## DESMOND FATALITY INQUIRY HEARINGS BEGIN MAY 21

Thursday, May 16, 2019 (Halifax, NS) – The public hearings to determine who will participate in the upcoming Desmond Fatality Inquiry are scheduled to begin on Tuesday, May 21, in Guysborough, N.S.

**Please note that this stage of the Inquiry proceedings will not be livestreamed.** Media and the public are welcome to attend the hearings in person at the Guysborough Municipal Building, 33 Pleasant St., Guysborough, N.S.

**Public seating in the hearing room is limited and priority will be given to family members involved in the Inquiry.** There will be a live video feed from the hearing room to a Media Room on site and, if necessary, to an overflow viewing room at the nearby Chedabucto Lifestyle Centre, 60 Green St., Guysborough, N.S.

It is anticipated that the proceedings will be livestreamed online starting in September, and the archived webcast video, as well as the written transcripts, will be posted at [www.desmondinquiry.ca](http://www.desmondinquiry.ca).

The hearings next week are scheduled to begin at 9:30 a.m. The building will open to media and the public at 8:30 a.m. Visitors are asked to use the side entrance. The hearing room is located on the main floor and the Media Room is downstairs. There are signs on site and a Deputy Sheriff will be on hand to help direct visitors.

There is free public parking in the lot behind the municipal building and along the road on Church Street. If required, there is additional parking at the nearby Guysborough Historical Society on Pleasant Street.

There will be guest Wi-Fi available for media and other visitors attending the Inquiry. Temporary passwords are valid for up to five consecutive days and are available at the Inquiry Administration Office.

Members of the media covering the Inquiry are expected to review and abide by the attached Media Protocol. This document is also available on the Media Page of the Inquiry website at <https://www.desmondinquiry.ca/media.html>.

### **Background on the Inquiry**

On Jan. 3, 2017, the bodies of Lionel Desmond, a veteran of the war in Afghanistan, his wife Shanna, their 10-year-old daughter Aaliyah, and Mr. Desmond's mother Brenda, were found in a home in Upper Big Tracadie, Guysborough County. It is believed that Mr. Desmond took the lives of his family members, before he took his own life.

Nova Scotia's Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Matt Bowes, reviewed the circumstances of the deaths and recommended to the Minister of Justice that an inquiry be held under the province's [Fatality Investigations Act](#).

A recommendation under Sec. 26 of the Act requires the Minister to order that an inquiry be held. With that order, the Chief Judge of the Provincial and Family Courts of Nova Scotia appoints a Judge to conduct the inquiry and make recommendations on any issues identified in the order of the Minister.

The Inquiry's mandate is to determine the circumstances under which these deaths occurred, as well as some specific issues, including, but not limited to whether Lionel Desmond and his family had access to the appropriate mental health and domestic violence intervention services leading up to their deaths.

At the conclusion of the proceedings, Judge Zimmer will file a written report with the Provincial Court containing his findings and recommendations. His report will not contain any findings of legal responsibility. A copy of the report will be provided to the Minister of Justice.

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