

Regulation 28: Prevention of Future Deaths report

Martin Edward ELLIS (died 16.08.19)

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| | <p>THIS REPORT IS BEING SENT TO:</p> <p>1. [REDACTED] High Commissioner for Saint Lucia to the UK High Commission of Saint Lucia 1 Collingham Gardens Kensington London SW5 0HW</p> |
| 1 | <p>CORONER</p> <p>I am: Coroner ME Hassell Senior Coroner Inner North London St Pancras Coroner's Court Camley Street London N1C 4PP</p> |
| 2 | <p>CORONER'S LEGAL POWERS</p> <p>I make this report under the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, paragraph 7, Schedule 5, and The Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013, regulations 28 and 29.</p> |
| 3 | <p>INVESTIGATION and INQUEST</p> <p>On 13 September 2020, I commenced an investigation into the death of Martin Edward Ellis, aged 69 years. The investigation concluded at the end of the inquest earlier today. I made a narrative determination, a copy of which I attach.</p> |
| 4 | <p>CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DEATH</p> <p>Mr Ellis was electrocuted at the Sir John Compton Dam in Saint Lucia, while holidaying there with his family.</p> <p>The Water and Sewerage Company, WASCO, is the public sector water utility company, funded and managed by central government, responsible for water supply on the island. This includes responsibility for the dam.</p> |

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| 5 | <p>CORONER'S CONCERNS</p> <p>During the course of the inquest, the evidence revealed matters giving rise to concern. In my opinion, there is a risk that future deaths will occur unless action is taken. In the circumstances, it is my statutory duty to report to you.</p> <p>The MATTERS OF CONCERN are as follows.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The dam is apparently not open to members of the public, but Mr Ellis and his family were able to visit it with ease, not even knowing that it was restricted, still less having access prevented. 2. I found at inquest that the only warning sign was old, in poor repair and covered by foliage, so could not be seen. 3. I accepted evidence in court that construction workers did not warn the family off visiting the dam, but rather gave them directions on how to get there and where to park their car. 4. The electrocution was caused by exposed live wiring in a galvanised metal conduit. <p>I understand that the Chief Electrical Officer visited the site in the days after Mr Ellis's death and that the Ministry of Infrastructure, Ports, Energy and Labour is responsible for the Saint Lucia investigation. However, six months after Mr Ellis's death, no explanation has been provided to his family or to HM Senior Coroner for Inner North London, as to why there was an exposed live wire. Despite repeated requests, neither Mr Ellis's family nor I have been provided with a copy of the Chief Electrical Officer's report.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. The dam was built in 1996. I do not know whether the unsafe wiring is a result of a lack of appropriate building regulations enforcement. I do not know whether other constructions built at around the same time are unsafe. |
| 6 | <p>ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN</p> <p>In my opinion, action should be taken to prevent future deaths and I believe that you have the power to take such action.</p> |
| 7 | <p>YOUR RESPONSE</p> |

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| | <p>You are under a duty to respond to this report within 56 days of the date of this report, namely by 13 April 2020. I, the coroner, may extend the period.</p> <p>Your response must contain details of action taken or proposed to be taken, setting out the timetable for action. Otherwise you must explain why no action is proposed.</p> |
| 8 | <p>COPIES and PUBLICATION</p> <p>I have sent a copy of my report to the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HHJ Mark Lucraft QC, the Chief Coroner of England & Wales • [REDACTED], wife of Martin Ellis <p>I am also under a duty to send the Chief Coroner a copy of your response.</p> <p>The Chief Coroner may publish either or both in a complete or redacted or summary form. He may send a copy of this report to any person who he believes may find it useful or of interest. You may make representations to me, the Senior Coroner, at the time of your response, about the release or the publication of your response by the Chief Coroner.</p> |
| 9 | <p>DATE SIGNED BY SENIOR CORONER</p> <p>13.02.20</p> |