

10-17-2021 Pierre Lacroix – FF – Boat Attempted Rescue - River**Montreal Firefighters Mourn Colleague Lost During River Rescue**

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/montreal-firefighter-missing-boat-capsized-1.6214641>

Oct 17, 2021 [Verity Stevenson](#), [Holly Cabrera](#) · CBC News

Pierre Lacroix, 58, worked as a firefighter in the city for decades

Pierre Lacroix, the Montreal firefighter who died after his boat capsized in the Lachine rapids of the St. Lawrence River last night, was experienced in water rescues and had worked as a firefighter for more than 30 years.

A group of friends and colleagues gathered at the Lachine station where Lacroix worked for more than 20 years as they mourned his disappearance Sunday, said Montreal Fire Chief Richard Liebmann.

Liebmann confirmed Lacroix's death Monday, offering his condolences and saying that having to share the news was "the most difficult duty a firefighter can have."

Lacroix's body was recovered underneath the boat he was in at around 9 a.m. local time Monday.

Rescuers had been searching for him since he went missing in the Lachine rapids Sunday evening while attempting to rescue two people who were on a boat nearby.

Liebmann said Lacroix, who was 58, had a spouse and two children. He worked as a firefighter in the city for more than 30 years and was knowledgeable about the bodies of water in and around southern Montreal.

"Firefighter Lacroix was doing what he was trained to do, trying to rescue two people that were in imminent danger in the rapids and unfortunately he paid the ultimate price," Liebmann told reporters Monday.

Montreal Mayor Valérie Plante offered her condolences during the news conference.



Montreal Fire Chief Richard Liebmann spoke to reporters Monday, after the body of firefighter Pierre Lacroix was recovered from the St. Lawrence River. (Ryan Remiorz/The Canadian Press)

"A family has lost a spouse, a father, a brother," she said. "My thoughts are with the family, but also with the entire community of firefighters who are also a family."
 "They dedicate their lives to save others. Yesterday was strong proof of that."

Denis Coderre, the mayoral candidate for Ensemble Montréal, tweeted his condolences, saying "I offer my sincere condolences to his family, his relatives and his colleagues, who risk their lives for our security."

Boat was in a dangerous spot for divers

Lacroix was on the boat with three other firefighters, who were found downstream after going through the rapids with the two rescued boaters.



Liebmann said Lacroix's colleagues gathered at the Lachine fire station Sunday as they awaited news from the rescue operation. (Ryan Remiorz/The Canadian Press)

They were taken to hospital and searches began for Lacroix, with firefighters from several neighbouring cities — including Longueuil, Varennes, La Prairie, Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and Châteauguay — searching their areas of the river, Liebmann said.

The two people who originally needed to be rescued survived and were treated by paramedics, but did not require hospitalization.

The Canadian Coast Guard and Montreal police divers, as well as a helicopter from the Canadian Armed Forces and the Sûreté du Québec, participated in the search.

Liebmann said crews were finally able to get a camera underneath the boat this morning to see if Lacroix was there. The boat had been in a place that was too dangerous for divers to get to last night, he explained.



The body of a firefighter was recovered from the river around 9 a.m. on Oct. 18. (Simon-Marc Charron/Radio-Canada)

"Later on, we were able to get the resources necessary to get him out from under the boat," Liebmann said. "Every attempt was made."

Chris Ross, president of the Montreal Firefighters Association, said he had met with the family and that the association would be providing support for Lacroix's colleagues through its employee assistance program.

"We are going to do everything we can to make sure an event like this doesn't happen again, but we have to understand that as firefighters, we're called to go where people are in danger, so it will always be a job with a certain amount of risk," he said.



A boat with Montreal firefighters on board was swamped by a wave as they tried to rescue two stranded boaters. One firefighter was killed in the incident

The last firefighter to have died while in service in Montreal was 39-year-old Thierry Godfrind in 2012, who was struck by the fire truck that had driven him to the site of a fire. The city faced a hefty fine related to Godfrind's death, following an investigation by Quebec's workplace health and safety board.

Before that, a Montreal fire captain, Marcel Marleau, died in 2006 while battling a fire.

With files from Radio-Canada's Karine Bastien

The body of a Montreal firefighter was recovered Monday morning after he went missing when a rescue boat capsized on the St. Lawrence River.

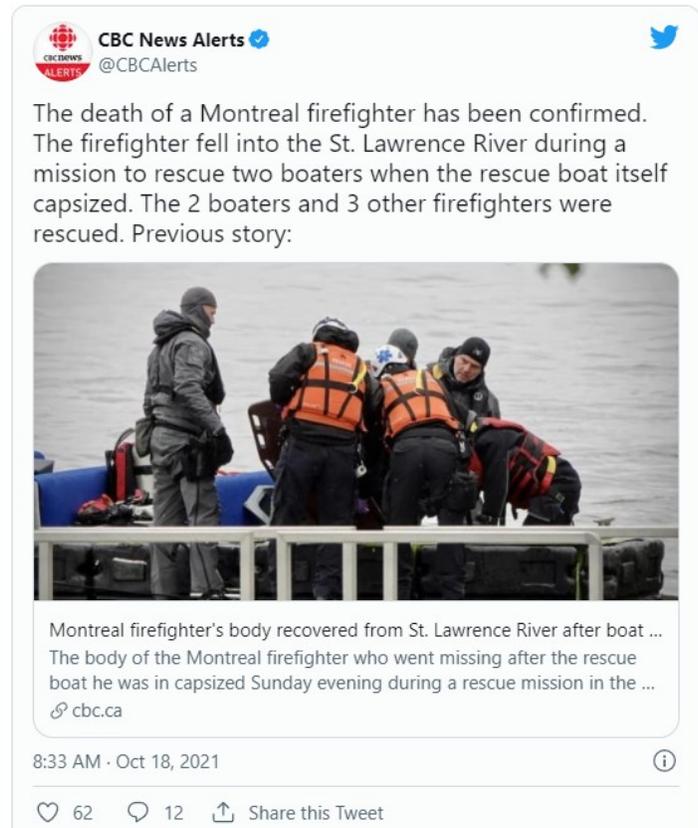
The [Montreal Gazette](#) has identified the veteran firefighter as Pierre Lacroix, 58, who drowned during a water rescue operation Sunday night. Crews had been dispatched at about 7:10 p.m. to a report of boaters in distress before their rescue craft capsized on the river.

Three firefighters and two boaters were rescued, but Lacroix could not be found until the next morning after underwater cameras located him stuck on the boat amid the rough waters of the Lachine Rapids, which made recovery efforts difficult for divers.

[Watch Video](#)

"Firefighter Lacroix made the ultimate sacrifice coming to the assistance of two people," Montreal Fire Chief Richard Liebmann said.

According to the Gazette, neighboring fire departments joined the search, along with the Montreal PD's nautical unit and Canadian military personnel. Flags across the city were lowered in honor of Lacroix, who was a father of two and worked out of Fire Station 64 in the borough of Lachine.



City Hall Flags Lowered To Honour Firefighter Who Died In Rescue Mission

<https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/montreal-firefighter-missing-in-st-lawrence-river-after-rescue-operation>
Oct 18, 2021 Jacob Serebrin Canadian Press

Pierre Lacroix, a 58-year-old father of two, was working out of fire station 64 in Lachine.

Montreal fire chief Richard Liebmann said the body of Pierre Lacroix, a married father of two, was recovered from the water with the help of Montreal police divers on Monday morning. Lacroix was transported to hospital where his death was confirmed at 9:25 a.m.

Lacroix, 58, was one of four firefighters dispatched shortly after 7 p.m. Sunday to rescue the occupants of a boat that was in trouble near the Lachine rapids in southwestern Montreal.

“There were two people that were in distress, they were drifting toward the rapids when our rescue boat made contact with them,” Liebmann told reporters Monday. Shortly after that, the fire boat capsized, Liebmann said.

The other three firefighters — and the two people they had originally set out to save — were quickly rescued, but the search for Lacroix continued into the night. Boats from fire departments in neighbouring communities participated in the search, along with police divers, as well as provincial police and military helicopters.

Around 3 a.m., rescuers were able to get a camera underneath the capsized boat, where they found signs of Lacroix. However, Liebmann said it was too dangerous to send divers under the boat until it was stabilized.

[Incumbent mayor Valérie Plante](#) offered her condolences to Lacroix’s family and colleagues, praising his courage and selflessness.

“Mr. Lacroix died doing what he trained for, doing what he truly believed was the right thing to do: saving other people’s lives even if it meant losing his own. I think it’s important to keep in mind how much courage it takes to do so,” she told reporters. The city has lowered its flags to half-mast in honour of Lacroix.

Montreal Mayor, Fire Department Pay Tribute To Firefighter Who Died During Rescue Operation

<https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/montreal-mayor-fire-department-pay-tribute-to-firefighter-who-died-during-rescue-operation-1.5627085>

October 19, 2021 [Daniel J. Rowe](#) CTVNewsMontreal.ca Digital Reporter

Montreal Mayor Valerie Plante and the Montreal Fire Department paid tribute to firefighter Pierre Lacroix on Monday after his body was retrieved from the St. Lawrence River, where he died performing a water rescue.

Lacroix, a 58-year-old married father of two, went under the water Sunday night while assisting a boat in distress.



Rescuers search for a firefighter missing in the St. Lawrence River following a rescue operation on Oct. 18, 2021.

PHOTO BY ALLEN MCINNIS / MONTREAL GAZETTE

His body was later pulled from the water along with the vessel he became trapped under during the rescue.

Search underway for missing firefighter in St. Lawrence River Montreal fire chief Richard Liebmann confirmed Monday morning that search and rescue crews, using an underwater camera, spotted the missing firefighter among the wreckage of the boat that sank in an "extremely dangerous" section of rapids.

"I have the most difficult duty a fire chief can have," Liebmann said while announcing his death.

"Firefighter Lacroix made the ultimate sacrifice coming to the assistance of two people."

Plante said that flags in the City of Montreal will be at half-mast in honour of the firefighter, who was based out of Fire Station 64 in the Montreal borough of Lachine "The City of Montreal is a big family," she said. "I invite the population to have a thought for all those who serve us, sometimes at the risk of their lives."

Even after locating Lacroix's body, the fire chief said it would take some time to recover him in the dangerous and fast-moving Lachine Rapids.

The two people who first needed help were rescued successfully, though everyone involved ended up capsized at one point.

According to Quebec provincial police, a boat carrying four Montreal firefighters went to the rescue of two people aboard another boat that lost power and ran into trouble in the Lachine Rapids sector, in the LaSalle borough, at approximately 7:10 p.m. on Sunday.

The two people got to safety, but for some reason, the firefighters' boat capsized, plunging the rescue crew into the rapids.

"So the people that they rescued, they went in the water, along with the firefighters," said Longueuil Fire Division Chief Stéphane Difruscia on Sunday night.

"But now, all those people are accounted for, except for one firefighter."



A rescue boat capsized while crews were assisting a boat in distress. A firefighter went under the water, and has since been spotted by a camera trapped under the wreckage of a boat underwater.

Three other firefighters were rescued and transported to hospital, as were the two victims.

Several emergency services were mobilized to help search for Lacroix, with teams from the La Prairie, Longueuil, Varennes and Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu fire departments working alongside their Montreal counterparts, along with water patrol officers from Montreal police and rescue teams from the Canadian Armed Forces.

Helicopter searches were also conducted at daybreak over the river and the shoreline.

REMINDER OF SACRIFICE

Hearing news that a member of emergency services fell in the line of duty prompted outpourings of support across the province and country.

Plante said it was a sad reminder that first responders are putting their lives on the line for the community's protection.

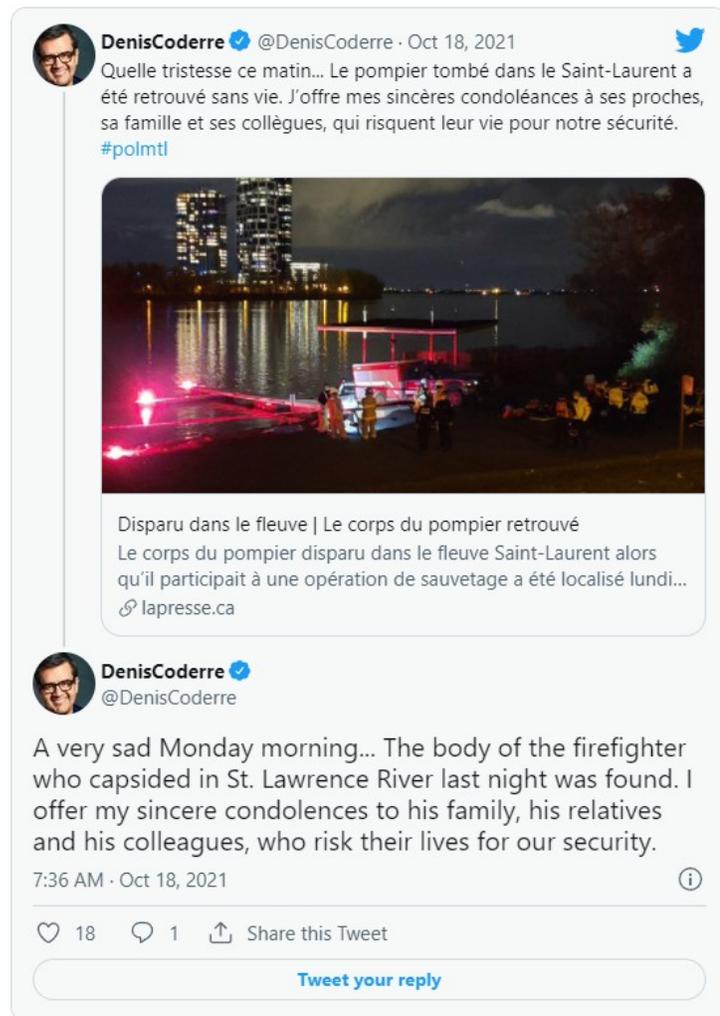
"On behalf of all Montrealers, I would like to offer my condolences to the members of the family as well as to all the firefighters of the SIM, and of firefighters union for the tragic loss of a father, a friend and a man of courage who died in service," Plante wrote. Plante's opponent in the upcoming election Denis Coderre added his condolences.

"A very sad Monday morning," he wrote. "I offer my sincere condolences to his family, his relatives and his colleagues, who risk their lives for our security."

Canada's public safety minister, Bill Blair, also wrote that Lacroix had made the "ultimate sacrifice" and that Blair was thinking of his loved ones.

RAPIDS CAN BE DEADLY

Corran Addison, an Olympic kayaker and three-time world champion, said he moved to Montreal in 1997 specifically because of the Lachine Rapids.



He said he watched the rescue operation from his kitchen and thought, "Oh no. Not again," as he feared another life would be lost in the water.



Montreal search and rescue crews are on the Saint Lawrence River Monday after a firefighter went into the river and disappeared.



A Montreal firefighter is dead after drowning during a rescue mission in the St. Lawrence River. photo: Matt Gilmour / CTV News Montreal

Addison kayaks is on the rapids regularly and even takes his seven-year-old son with him. But he said he knows that they can be very dangerous for anyone who's unfamiliar with them.

"I know the rapids backwards and inside and out, so when you do know that, they are not particularly dangerous," he said.

"If you don't know the rapids, if you don't know where you're going, you don't know what to do, if you don't know how to stay calm if things kind of get out of control, then they are extremely dangerous and in fact they're deadly. The Lachine Rapids kill a number of people every year."

Addison said he's seen a shift in the way responders head out into the rapids, which concerns him, along with as a loss of knowledge about the water in the area.

"I'm not saying that that knowledge has gone, but it appears to be less prevalent," he said.

A man in his 20s died in the same area last summer.

Death Of Firefighter Pierre Lacroix: "He Certainly Leaves A Huge Void Among Us," Says A Relative

<https://www.tvanouvelles.ca/2021/10/18/deces-du-pompier-pierre-lacroix-il-laisse-assurement-un-enorme-vide-parmi-nous-temoigne-un-proche>

October 2021 Alexandre Moranville-Ouellet | QMI Agency

The death of the firefighter of the Service de sécurité incendie de Montréal (SIM), Pierre Lacroix, during a nautical rescue intervention, Sunday evening, has aroused a lot of emotions in the population, one of his relatives testifying to the "void" that the man will leave among his loved ones.

- Read also: [Tragic intervention on the river: death as a hero at the dawn of his retirement](#)
- Read also: [The intervention leading to the death of a firefighter was filmed](#)
- Read also: [Death of firefighter Pierre Lacroix: firefighters bereaved](#)

"In the neighborhood, it was our Stone. [...] He was willing to go on detours to come and help in any way, even anonymously, or when we didn't ask for it. It certainly leaves a huge void among us...", said Monday with emotion Sébastien Vincent, neighbor and friend of Pierre Lacroix, at the microphone of Mario Dumont to Qub radio.

The one who had to walk through the houses of the neighborhood Monday morning to announce the sad news to the community wanted to pay a touching tribute to his friend, of whom he was the neighbor for 16 years now.

"He was a man who lived a lot for others. He disappeared as he lived, wanting to help, with his heart on his hand. This is what I said to one of his daughters today: his father remains in us with such a positive trace that he will never disappear from our minds, he died as a hero. And she said, 'He was my hero,'" he said.

A nautical rescue intervention had unfortunately gone wrong Sunday night, when the firefighter of the SIM lost his life.

Firefighters from Station 64 were called around 7 p.m. to rescue two people whose boat had just broken down in the Lachine Rapids.

However, the fireboat capsized, stranding Pierre Lacroix under the boat. His body was found Monday morning and his death was unfortunately recorded in the hospital.

Allison Hanes: Montreal's Firefighting Family Is In Mourning

Allison Hanes • Montreal Gazette ahanes@postmedia.com

Firefighter Pierre Lacroix lost his life Sunday saving two people. He leaves behind a wife and two children, but also a wider family of over 2,800 firefighters and civilian employees who work for the Montreal fire department.

"Our family protects yours."

The motto of the Association des pompiers de Montréal was as poignant as it was on point Monday, as the city's firefighters mourned one of their own.

Pierre Lacroix, 58, a 30-year veteran who worked at Caserne 64 for the Service de sécurité incendie de Montréal, was killed during a rescue operation Sunday on the Lachine Rapids.

Lacroix, who was approaching retirement, leaves behind a wife and two children — but also a wider family of over 2,800 firefighters and civilian employees who work for the Montreal fire department. They will grieve his loss both publicly and privately.

Family was the word on everyone's lips Monday as Fire Chief Richard Liebmann, firefighting association president Chris Ross and Mayor Valérie Plante announced Lacroix's death outside public security headquarters on the flank of Mount Royal.



Montreal police investigate the scene Monday, October 18, 2021 after firefighter Pierre Lacroix was killed during a rescue operation on the Lachine Rapids. Photo by Allen McInnis /Montreal Gazette

Liebmann said firefighting is a calling that demands courage on a daily basis. He said Lacroix made the “ultimate sacrifice” in the service of others. Ross spoke of the importance of trust between colleagues who run toward danger when everyone else is fleeing.

“The strength of the fire department is the kind of teamwork we saw. It’s when we come together as a family — what we call in English ‘the brotherhood,’ ” Ross said.

Plante spoke of Lacroix as “a spouse, a father, a brother, a friend.” She offered heartfelt condolences to his family, first and foremost — but also to his colleagues in the Montreal fire department.

“This is a tragedy that is going to affect many people,” she said.

Tributes and condolences poured in from Ensemble Montréal Leader Denis Coderre on the campaign trail and Public Security Minister Geneviève Guilbault in Quebec City, among others.

Liebmann said Lacroix had been stationed at Caserne 64 in Lachine for 20 years and was an expert on nautical rescues of the type that claimed his life.

“He was doing what he wanted to do, what he was trained to do,” Liebmann said. Lacroix was part of a team that responded to an emergency call that came in around 7 p.m. Sunday. Two people were stranded in a boat that was drifting toward the dangerous Lachine Rapids. During the rescue operation, the firefighters’ boat capsized. The Transportation Safety Board, the provincial workplace health and safety board, the fire department and Montreal police are all investigating. Amateur video footage shared with TVA seemed to suggest the boat was struck by a wave.

Three other firefighters and the two civilians were pulled from the roiling waters and were taken to hospital for treatment of minor injuries. But Lacroix went under and was reported missing.

A second rescue operation involving neighbouring fire departments, the Montreal police, the Sûreté du Québec and the Canadian Armed Forces ran into the wee hours. Lacroix was finally detected using a camera under the hull of the overturned fire rescue boat. It took specialized divers, who risked their own lives in extremely perilous conditions, to recover Lacroix’s body early Monday morning.

Though fatal accidents are surely difficult on first responders physically and psychologically at any time, having to retrieve a fallen colleague must take a particular toll. Firefighters rely on the professionalism, knowledge and sense of duty that are instilled through rigorous training, but true bravery shines through when such operations must be carried out with a heavy heart.

Firefighters put themselves in harm's way every day, whether it's entering burning buildings or freeing the victims of terrible car wrecks.

When they say goodbye to their loved ones to report for duty, there's always a chance they won't make it home again. Small as the risk is, it's there with every call, every day of their careers. And no matter how much experience they have, it can never be completely eliminated.

The last firefighter death in Montreal occurred in 2012, almost a decade ago, when Thierry Godfrind was struck by the fire truck that brought him to an emergency. Before that, Capt. Marcel Marleau died in the line of duty in 2006, when he became trapped in a burning building in Montreal North.

2004, Montreal Capt. Alain Parent was killed off duty, trying to help rescue two men who had fallen into a septic tank at a campground in Mont-St-Hilaire. Even on vacation, firefighters can't resist risking it all to save others.

All were honoured for their heroism. Their funerals were attended by thousands of their brethren. Montreal has already lowered municipal flags to half-mast for Lacroix, who saved two lives in laying down his own.

His death is a reminder that life is fragile — even for the brave and the strong