

# Quebec truck crash kills 3 cyclists, injures 3

Accident was like a 'bowling match,' survivor says

*Last Updated: Friday, May 14, 2010 | 10:50 PM ET*

CBC News



*Police examine the scene where a pickup truck plowed into a group of cyclists, killing three and injuring three others on Friday. (Ryan Remiorz/Canadian Press)* The accident that killed three cyclists and injured three others southeast of Montreal on Friday was like a "bowling match," says one of the survivors.

The cyclists, all from Montreal's south shore, were hit from behind by a pickup truck.

"I felt like I was flying and everyone around me was flying," Jean Dessureault said.



*Cyclists Sandra de la Garza Aguilar, left, and Christine Deschamps, were killed when they were struck by a pickup truck in Rougemont, Que. A third cyclist, Lyn Duhamel, also died. (Saint-Lambert Triathlon Club/CBC)* The cyclists, members of the Saint-Lambert Triathlon Club, were training for an Ironman competition in Lake Placid, N.Y., in July, Dessureault told the CBC's French-language service.

The three women who died have been identified as Sandra de la Garza Aguilar, 36, of Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville, Que., Lyn Duhamel, 39, of Boucherville, Que., and Christine Deschamps, 44, of Brossard, Que.

Dessureault, and the two other injured cyclists — both women — were released from hospital on Friday afternoon.

"We trained together all the time," Dessureault said. "It is horrible — they were young women in perfect health."

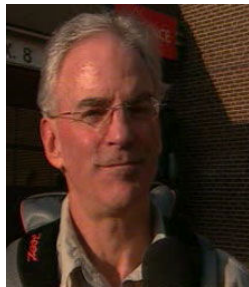
## Heading to Sherbrooke

The crash scene stretched more than 30 metres along Highway 112 near Rougemont and was strewn with mangled bike frames, shoes, water bottles and a wristwatch.

The cyclists are friends who regularly ride together and were en route to Sherbrooke on Friday morning as part of their training for the triathlon season, police said.

The pickup struck them just before 10 a.m. The truck driver, who was heading east at the time, was not injured. Police said he rushed to help the cyclists and administered first aid.

"The driver of the vehicle in question was a man and alcohol is not a factor," said Quebec



provincial police Sgt. Claude Denis. *Cyclist Jean Dessureault, who survived the crash, said it felt like a 'bowling match.'* (CBC)

He said it was too soon to say what caused the accident or whether charges will be laid.

The group was training at the same time as a faster pack of riders farther down the road.

Shortly before the crash, the survivors had been riding two by two, said a spokesman for the club, Éric Lemyre. But they returned to a single file formation because the road had no paved shoulder.

"They didn't even see the car coming, everything was very quick," Lemyre said. "[all of a sudden], three people they love were lying on the street."

The weather was cloudy, but no rain was reported in the morning. Highway traffic was rerouted while police investigated.

The highway was closed until just before 8 p.m.

## No paved shoulders

Bruno Sévigny, a member of the same cycling club, was riding about an hour behind the victims on Friday.



*Six cyclists were en route to Sherbrooke as part of their training for triathlon season when the crash happened. (CBC)* Still dressed in his cycling gear, he told reporters on the scene he was in complete shock.

"It's obviously very dangerous here," Sévigny said.

Marc Villeneuve, a resident in the region, said he regularly rides around Rougemont but doesn't use Highway 112 because it has no paved shoulders.

"I avoid that area," he told CBC News, standing near the crash scene. "There is no shoulder on the road. So even if the car [lanes] are doubled on each side, the traffic is very fast and there's gravel on the [side]."

"It's very dangerous."

Officials with Quebec's Transport Ministry said the province had already planned to repave the section of the highway where the crash occurred and would also pave the shoulders.

Work is to start in the next few weeks, said ministry spokeswoman Julie Morin.

### **Cyclists have 'right to be there'**

The crash is a tragic reminder for transport officials about the pressing need to make roads safer for two-wheeled vehicles, said Suzanne Lareau, president of cycling advocacy group Vélo-Québec.

Under Quebec highway rules, any road travelled by more than 5,000 vehicles a day must have



paved shoulders. *Police say they aren't sure how many cyclists were directly struck by the truck. (Ryan Remiorz/Canadian Press)*

"I can't understand why on this part of the road, why the shoulder was not paved," she said.

The accident is an occasion to remind drivers of the need to share the road with cyclists, said Jean-Marie de Koninck, president of the province's Road Safety Experts Group.

"You have to slow down because the cyclists have the right to be there, and you must leave them enough space to drive safely," de Koninck said.

The crash bears a chilling resemblance to a similar incident last summer in Ottawa, when five experienced cyclists were struck.

None of them died, but one spent months recovering in hospital. The driver in that incident has been charged with hit and run

Read more: <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/montreal/story/2010/05/14/quebec-cycling-accident.html#ixzz0oNUgB66Q>