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## INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release  
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Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General  
BC Coroners Service

### **Dates confirmed for inquest into death of Heather Louise Cote**

VICTORIA – The BC Coroners Service will hold an inquest into the death of Heather Louise Cote, beginning on Sept. 18, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. (Pacific time) at the Kelowna Law Courts (1355 Water St.).

The death of Cote, 60, was reported to the BC Coroners Service by Merritt RCMP on Aug. 26, 2017.

Under Section 18(2) of the Coroners Act, inquests are mandatory for any deaths that occur while a person was detained by or in the custody of a peace officer.

A coroner's inquest is a public inquiry that serves three primary functions:

- to determine the facts related to a death, including the identity of the deceased and how, when, where and by what means the individual came to their death, as well as a classification for the death;
- to make recommendations, where appropriate and supported by evidence, to prevent deaths in similar circumstances; and
- to ensure public confidence that the circumstances surrounding the death of an individual will not be overlooked, concealed or ignored.

Susan Barth, presiding coroner, and a jury will hear evidence from witnesses under oath to determine the facts surrounding this death. The jury will have the opportunity to make recommendations aimed at preventing deaths under similar circumstances. A jury must not make any finding of legal responsibility or express any conclusion of law.

For more information on inquests, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/life-events/death/coroners-service/inquest-schedule-jury-findings-verdicts>

Livestreaming allows the public and media to virtually attend an inquest. The same rules apply as for in-person attendance at an inquest. Reproduction, broadcasting and publishing, including through social media, of inquest proceedings is prohibited. Supreme Court-accredited media are permitted to record the proceeding solely for the accuracy of their notes. The recording is not to be broadcast in any form. Accredited media members must provide proof to the sheriff and visibly display their accreditation at all times that they are recording or using electronic devices in court. Recording for any other purpose or by anyone without appropriate accreditation is strictly prohibited.

To access the livestream, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/life-events/death/coroners-service/inquest-schedule-jury-findings-verdicts/inquestlivestream>

**Learn More:**

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BC Coroners Service: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/coroners/>

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