



Fresno County Sheriff - Coroner's Office

Margaret Mims, Sheriff - Coroner

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News Release

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Drowning Victim Recovered and Identified

Around 8:15 am on Tuesday, September 3rd, members of the Fresno County Sheriff's Dive Unit recovered a man's body from the bottom of the Kings River. He has been identified as 48 year old Baltazar Lopez of Selma. Lopez was found between 5 and 10 feet down in the water, a short distance from the beach area where he initially entered the river.

Around 3:30 pm on Monday, September 2nd, Fresno County Sheriff dispatchers received a 911 call from a visitor at Laton – Kingston Park, located at 20055 Fowler Ave. in Laton. Deputies responded to the park and spoke with witnesses who said Baltazar Lopez was swimming with his teenage son when the current of the Kings River swept the man away. The sheriff's helicopter, EAGLE One, was first to arrive and searched the water, but was unable to see Lopez. The sheriff's Boating Unit and Dive Unit later arrived with specialized equipment and conducted an extensive search of the area where Lopez was last seen. The search was called off around 7:30 pm due to darkness. A plan was made to resume the search early the next morning, which they ultimately carried out.

Deputies determined Lopez was not a good swimmer and was not wearing a life jacket.

The Sheriff's Office encourages everyone to be safe in and around pools and all natural waterways. Take these simple measures.

- 1) Wear a life jacket. Make sure children have one that fits them properly.**
- 2) Stay out of the water if you are not an experienced swimmer.**

- 3) Parents should watch their children at all times.**
- 4) Do not mix alcohol and swimming. Alcohol causes swimmers to fatigue faster than normal and can create dangerous situations.**
- 5) Understand that when it's hot outside you will get tired faster than usual.**
- 6) Respect the water. The temperature of the water remains cold and the current is often stronger than it appears. There can be debris in the water, which is difficult to see and may cause hazardous situations for swimmers. Be careful of the mud on the bottom of lakes and rivers, it's easy to sink in some spots and get your feet stuck.**