



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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MKO Encourages First Nations Citizens to Remain Vigilant During Thanksgiving

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. is issuing a statement to encourage First Nations citizens to remain vigilant during the Thanksgiving holiday weekend.

“The Province of Manitoba has increasing numbers of confirmed cases of COVID-19. With this comes an increase in hospitalizations and unfortunately, we are even hearing of more deaths due to COVID-19,” stated **Grand Chief Garrison Settee**. “In recent weeks, some MKO First Nations have had the first confirmed cases of COVID in their communities. With the upcoming holiday of Thanksgiving, which is usually a popular time to gather with loved ones, MKO is reminding First Nations citizens to remain vigilant and take precautions to help keep themselves and their loved ones safe from COVID-19.”

MKO is encouraging everyone to keep following public health guidelines:

- Practice physical distancing: Keep two meters apart from other people.
- Practice good hand hygiene: Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water. If you aren't able to wash your hands, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Wear a non-medical face mask when in public, especially in indoor spaces where distancing is not possible.
- Do not hold large gatherings.
- Keep interactions virtual as much as possible.
- If you do gather in person, keep following public health guidelines and do not share food.
- Avoid buffet-style dinners to keep different people from touching the same utensils, condiments, etc.

If you do get sick and have symptoms of COVID-19, you need to self-isolate and contact your local health care provider. You can also call Health Links for guidance toll free at 1-888-315-9257 or in Winnipeg at 204-788-8200. Health Links is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

“I want to wish a happy Thanksgiving holiday to all First Nations citizens and Northern residents. I recognize that you have worked hard to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Northern Manitoba. I urge you to keep practicing public health measures. Let's all work together to protect our loved ones and our Elders,” said Grand Chief Settee. “Thanksgiving is the perfect opportunity to continue to spread kindness and show support to anyone who needs it. You can show your support by dropping off a meal or supplies to someone or by calling or sending a message to catch up with your loved ones.”

MKO reminds Manitoba residents that there is a public health order that prohibits travel to Northern

Manitoba, north of the 53rd parallel. MKO commends the Misipawistik Cree Nation, which is setting up a check stop on Highway 6 today to monitor and enforce the provincial travel order.

MKO continues to work closely with the leadership in First Nations to stay informed of any challenges they are facing when it comes to responding to the pandemic. MKO will advocate on behalf of the First Nations on an as-needed basis.

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Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is a non-profit, political advocacy organization that has represented 26 First Nation communities in Manitoba's North since 1981. The MKO represents more than 72,000 First Nations people.

