



## Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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For immediate release  
October 13, 2020

### **MKO Concerned with Rising Cases of COVID-19 in Manitoba: Manitoba Residents Encouraged to Remain Vigilant to Reduce the Spread of the Virus**

**Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB** – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. is concerned about the record number of COVID-19 cases announced for the Province of Manitoba today. The province announced a record high of 124 new cases today.

“While most of the COVID-19 cases are in the Winnipeg health region, we are reminding Manitoba citizens to remain vigilant to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to Northern Manitoba. Continue to practice public health measures and limit your gatherings. We also recommend that Northern residents limit their travel to Winnipeg,” stated **Grand Chief Garrison Settee**. **“We are asking everyone to limit the size of social gatherings as we know this is one way the virus is being spread.** We also recommend people limit their travel to Winnipeg, but we encourage people to keep attending medical appointments as we are not yet aware of evidence that the virus is being spread through medical facilities.”

“Several MKO First Nations have now had their first confirmed cases of COVID in their communities. We encourage all MKO citizens to follow the advice of their leadership and public health officials. MKO continues to work closely with leadership on the issue of COVID-19 and we will continue to share updates on social media and on our website,” said Grand Chief Settee.

MKO is also reminding Manitoba residents that there is a [public health order](#) restricting travel to Northern Manitoba. During the Thanksgiving weekend, the **Misipawistik Cree Nation** set up a check stop on Highway 6 to monitor the travel restriction.

“I am very concerned about the volume of travel into the North,” shared **Chief Heidi Cook** of the Misipawistik Cree Nation. “The travel restrictions in place don’t seem to have any effect because they are not widely known. If there was any monitoring and enforcement happening, they would become widely known. We don’t know yet what impact Thanksgiving weekend will have in terms of cases in the North, hopefully none. But given a lot of people travel to visit family for the holiday, and this is not the best time to be doing that, Misipawistik Cree Nation put up a check stop to monitor the non-essential travel restrictions for Northern Manitoba. From 8 am on Friday, October 9 to 8 am today, October 13, we recorded a total of 1,773 vehicles passing through. Only 629 of these were considered essential travellers.”

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.

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.*