



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

For immediate release
June 24, 2022

MKO Continues to Be Concerned for the Safety of Indigenous Women Using Taxis in the City of Winnipeg

Treaty One Territory, Winnipeg, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is issuing this statement to express ongoing concerns for the safety of Indigenous women who need to use taxis in the City of Winnipeg.

“Today we are issuing yet another warning for Indigenous women using taxis in the City of Winnipeg. If you are planning to use a taxi, please be vigilant. MKO is aware of new allegations of sexual assault against a taxi driver in Winnipeg,” said **Grand Chief Garrison Settee**.

“On behalf of MKO, I commend **Michelle Hanslip** for sharing what she went through when using Unicity Taxi earlier this month. It is never easy to come forward to share these kinds of truths and we recognize you for your bravery. MKO continues to be concerned about the safety of First Nations citizens using taxis in Winnipeg. I encourage anyone who has witnessed or experienced unsafe incidents in taxis to file a report with the Winnipeg Police Service,” stated Grand Chief Settee. “We continue to call on all taxi companies and the City of Winnipeg to step up to ensure First Nations people can access safe taxi services. MKO also calls on all levels of government to recognize this ongoing harm and to implement Calls for Justice 4.8 and 17.9 from the *Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*.”

“I am deeply concerned of this latest incident of a women being victimized by a service which is supposed to be providing a safe mode of transportation,” said **Heidi Spence**, director of MKO’s Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Liaison Unit. “This is becoming too common, and it is not okay. Our relatives have the right to access safe public services without fear for their personal safety. Better safeguard procedures should be put into place to ensure everyone accessing ride for hire services is protected adequately.”

MKO has previously issued warnings, in October 2021 and March 2022, to First Nations citizens regarding their safety in taxis in the City of Winnipeg.

First Nations citizens from across Manitoba often need to use taxis to access services and attend events in Winnipeg. A few safety tips for those who must access taxi services include:

- Take a picture of the cab number and/or license plate number
- Ride in the back seat of the taxi rather than in the front, if possible
- Enable the location services or GPS tracking on your phone
- Input local emergency numbers into your phone before you use a taxi
- Try to travel with a friend or family member

- Let someone know where you are

You can find more detailed safety tips online [here](#).

The MMIWG Liaison Unit is available to provide safe and confidential support for anyone who has also experienced sexual and physical violence. Anyone who needs support can call MKO's MMIWG Liaison Unit toll free at 1-800-442-0488 or at 204-307-0485.

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