



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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MKO Responds to New Public Health Orders for Northern Manitoba: Increased Restrictions Coming into Force on Monday, October 26, 2020

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. is responding to today's announcement that Manitoba's Chief Provincial Public Health Officer is issuing new COVID-19 public health orders for the Northern health region and Churchill. The orders come into effect on **Monday, October 26** and remain in effect for at least two weeks.

"Unfortunately, we are seeing growing rates of COVID-19 in the Northern health region. The new restrictions being put in place should remind citizens in Northern Manitoba to remain vigilant to prevent the spread of COVID-19. 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**.

The restrictions will be the same as those in place in the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region. This includes:

- reducing gathering sizes;
- closing of casinos, bingo halls, and entertainment facilities with a license under the *Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Act* that requires the licensee to present live entertainment must close to members of the public, with the exception of providing food for take-out or delivery;
- limiting the occupancy of other licensed businesses, retail businesses, and restaurants of 50 per cent of their usual capacity;
- limiting the occupancy of personal service businesses of 50 per cent of their usual occupancy or one person for each 10 square metres of the premises that is open to the public, whichever is less; and
- requiring a restaurant or licensed premises, theatre, museum, gallery, library, personal service business, concert hall, or fitness facility to keep contact information for members of the public attending their premises and maintain those records for 21 days to support contract tracing.

There are also measures being put in place for schools in the Northern health region under the Restricted Level (orange), effective October 26:

- Schools must ensure two metres of physical distancing to the greatest extent possible, and adjust classroom space as necessary; excess furniture must be removed from classrooms to create additional space; and other spaces within schools must be repurposed to accommodate more distancing (e.g., multipurpose rooms, empty rooms, shared spaces, common areas and libraries).
- Extracurricular activities are only permitted if all learning and distancing requirements have been met. If these activities continue, established guidelines must be followed and, in the case of sports, participants should maintain distance when not active.

- Teachers and staff who move across cohorts of students, including substitute teachers, are required to wear medical masks. Medical-grade disposable masks have been issued to all schools. N95 masks are not required.
- Indoor choir and the use of wind instruments are not permitted.
- All field trips must be postponed or cancelled.
- Blended learning (in-class and online) for grades 9 to 12 where distancing cannot be achieved will continue as per status quo.
- Kindergarten to Grade 8 students may be offered a temporary remote learning option for the duration of the Restricted level (orange).
- All other public health measures will still in effect.

“We encourage all MKO citizens to follow the advice of their leadership and public health officials,” said Grand Chief Garrison Settee. “This pandemic is a difficult time for everyone as we are all tired of this pandemic. I want to remind people to be kind and support one another. Don’t shame people if they need to go for a test for COVID-19 and don’t spread rumours on social media about people testing positive. Let’s support one another and get through this pandemic together.”

MKO is also reminding Manitoba residents that there is a [public health order](#) restricting travel to Northern Manitoba.

MKO encourages 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 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.