



KETEGAUNSEEBEE

GARDEN RIVER FIRST NATION

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April 4, 2020

COMMUNITY NOTICE

Declared State of Emergency & Restricted Access

Effective April 5, 2020 at 12 Noon

On Tuesday, March 31, 2020, Chief and Council officially declared a State of Emergency for the community of Garden River (as per BCR #2019-2020-37). With the increasing strength of the COVID-19 pandemic in this country and worldwide, the leadership will be exercising extreme measures to protect the citizens of Garden River. Based on the emergency declaration, there will be an implementation of two restricted checkpoints, which will be monitored and operated by community members. These checkpoints will be on the HWY 17B East and West Boundaries of Garden River First Nation and all other access points leading into the community from the 4 lane HWY 17 will be blocked. The restricted checkpoints will begin on **Sunday, April 5, 2020 at 12 Noon** and will be in effect until May 1, 2020. We will be monitoring provincial updates regarding physical distancing orders and business and agency closures to assess and adjust our own community safety measures as per the most updated information.

Although these measures may seem extreme, they are necessary as we know that we do not have the adequate resources or capacity to fight this virus if it hits our community. We have many elders, knowledge keepers, children and families and citizens who have underlying health conditions. We want to ensure that we are protecting not just the most vulnerable but everyone in this community. We are also enacting a 12:00am-6:00am curfew pursuant to **By-Law #2020-01** passed by Chief and Council on April 3, 2020. We are directing all citizens to adhere to the conditions set out in the by-law. This by-law will be enforced by our local Anishinabek Police Services. As a community, it is essential that we all take responsibility for the safety of our members and community and adhere to the curfew.

Our Fire Department Services will be assisting with these checkpoints along with support from our Anishinabek Police Services (APS). Safety is paramount and we want to implement the highest measures to ensure that the individuals who will be operating these checkpoints are properly protected and prepared to man these checkpoints.

We are including a FAQ section accompanying this letter to help you, as citizens, to understand these restrictions. Garden River members, when necessary, will have the ability to leave and return to the reserve, but we will be tracking that information at these checkpoints. **PLEASE COMPLY WITH THESE SAFETY LIMITATIONS. As much as possible, STAY HOME.** We know there are exceptions requiring the need to travel to and from the community, such as to buy groceries, medication, medical appointments, work, etc. If you need to leave the community, we ask that you plan your trips so that it reduces the frequency of your need to travel. In addition, with a number of community members such as staff living outside of Garden River and other essential service employees that come into the community, we will have a process that will help identify

those various levels of access. Garden River will be restricting access for all non-essential visitors until it can be re-evaluated at a later date.

This decision by Garden River leadership was made with the input and in consultation with health services, first responders and police services. This was and continues to be one of the most difficult decisions that we have faced in a long time. For generations, it has brought comfort knowing that in times of community need, Garden River citizens have collectively worked together in the face of adversity and crisis. This time is no different but a lot more serious in relation to the threat to the health and lives of our citizens.

This declaration effectively restricts travel of individuals into Garden River First Nation to:

- Garden River Residents
- Critical and essential employees of the Garden River organization and its community partners (inclusive of Nogdawindamin Family and Community Services, Niigaaniin Ontario Works, Anishinabek Police Services, OPP and visiting health service professionals)
- Emergency Services personnel
- Delivery of essential supplies
- Employees at essential service locations
- Other exigent circumstances

To our members living off-reserve and returning home:

First, know that we love you and we want to see you, but please, avoid visiting or coming home at this time. For you to come home right now increases risk of exposure to our members residing in the community. We encourage you to remain where you are, close to important health and community services where you are living and avoid the potential of bringing a virus like COVID-19 home. One of the highest risks of spreading this virus come from those who may not show symptoms and are unaware that they carry the virus.

If you must come home, know that you must have permission from whomever you intend to see as your decision affects them too.

We have developed an access identification card, which will be distributed to homeowners including all other vehicles for that particular residence. These cards are to be hung from your rear-view mirror, to make it easier to pass checkpoints without delay at the reserve entrance. The passes identify different levels of access for Garden River Residents On Reserve, Off Reserve Members and Essential Services.

If our check point personnel do not recognize the proper identification hanging from a mirror, or a vehicle does not meet the membership, resident, staff or essential service requirements, they may be restricted from entering the community. Only Essential delivery services to the community (Transport Shipments/Food/Health/Inventory Supplies) will be granted access. All restricted traffic wishing to travel through Garden River will be directed to the 4 lane HWY 17, which will be open to external traffic.

What you can expect from this access restriction to non-essential visitors:

Coming into the community from HWY 17B East or West locations, an electronic sign will be placed informing everyone that the Garden River community is limited to local traffic only. There will be a roadway checkpoint station set up on both ends of the community coming into Garden River. Traffic will be restricted to a single lane with barriers in place and all individuals attempting to access the Garden River community will be stopped unless showing the proper access passes.

What you can expect from this road restriction for Garden River Citizens:

Check point personnel from our community will be stopping returning vehicles coming into Garden River. Personnel will greet and ask a couple of questions to determine if you are experiencing any COVID-19-like symptoms and where you are coming from. Screening tools and procedures have been vetted through the OPP, APS and recognized health agencies.

The Garden River Chief and Council thanks everyone for their understanding, prayers and compliance with this critical action necessary to safeguard our citizens. *Please know our power is in isolation, please stay home and avoid all unnecessary travel at all costs.*

Chi-Meegwetch,

Garden River First Nation Chief and Council



OJIBWAYS OF ROBINSON-HURON TREATY OF 1850

GARDEN RIVER FIRST NATION



KEY

- Highway 17A
- Highway 17B
- Residential Roads
- Bridge
- NO ACCESS
- ACCESS



Restricted Access Points Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Is this a blockade or a total shut down in this community?

A. This is **NOT** a blockade; this is a restricted and manned checkpoint authorized by Chief and Council. Garden River will be implementing two restricted checkpoints on opposite ends of the community. HWY 17B East and West boundaries of Garden River will be restricting access only to Garden River residents and essential service providers.

Q. Are you closing all other access points in the community to the new Hwy?

A. Yes, all other access points into the community will be blocked off. Safety is paramount so proper signage will be erected notifying citizens and non-citizens.

Q. What will happen with traffic wanting to travel through Garden River?

A. All traffic restricted from entering the community at HWY 17B will be diverted to the HWY 17 Bypass.

Q. What are essential service providers?

A. Critical and essential employees of the Garden River organization and its community partners (inclusive of Nogdawindamin Family and Community Services, Niigaaniin Ontario Works, Anishinabek Police Services, OPP, EMS, visiting health service professionals, and employees of authorized convenience stores)

Q. Will residents be allowed to come and go?

A. Yes. However, Garden River residents should only travel when necessary (i.e. to buy groceries, medication, medical appointments and if you work off reserve, etc.) for the safety and wellbeing of the community. All community members should stay home to avoid the risk of exposure to COVID-19. In addition, Garden River Chief and Council will be enforcing a curfew (12:00am - 6:00am) for all residents and APS will be notified to stop any vehicles from travelling in the community during curfew hours unless for emergency purposes.

Q. Who will be restricted from coming through?

A. Non-essential services, non-residents of Garden River and non-essential visitors will be restricted.

Q. Are there any additional measures you are implementing to assist?

A. Yes, we will be providing citizens and essential service providers with access passes to hang around the rear-view mirror of your vehicle for efficient and safe monitoring through these checkpoints.

Q. What if I have more than one vehicle?

A. We will make sure you have the necessary passes for the number of vehicles with permanent residents at that location.

Q. How do I get a pass?

A. Passes will be distributed at the checkpoints and available for pick up at the community centre Monday, April 6, 2020 to Friday, April 10, 2020 from 9am to 4pm. Physical Distancing Measures will be in place.

Q. What kind of screening or questions will be asked?

A. The COVID-19 Taskforce has reached out to other communities that have implemented similar measures and have acquired screening tools from the OPP and APS. There's a set of four health related questions inquiring about any existing or pre-existing symptoms of COVID-19.

Q. If symptoms are identified, what will happen next?

A. You will be asked to return home, isolate and quarantine yourself for 14 days and post a YELLOW sign in your window or door that signifies that you are not feeling well. If you are a confirmed COVID-19 carrier, you will be asked to post a RED sign in your window or door that signifies you are infected. Our Health Department and team will be notified along with any other Public Health source that requires such information. More information will be forthcoming in these emergency circumstances.

Q. Who will be operating these checkpoints?

A. Members of our Fire Services team along with volunteer staff and members of our community. Individuals will go through some basic training and safety preparation to operate these stations.

Q. What safety measures will be in place for the checkpoints?

A. OPP's Provincial Liaison Team and their Indigenous Liaison have been notified of the plan and will provide the assistance when necessary. Our local APS detachments are ready and available to help ensure that all proper safety precautions are in place. APS will be called if there are any individuals not adhering to the conditions of these restrictions.

Q. How long will the curfew and checkpoints be in place?

A. The curfew and checkpoints will be in place until May 1st, 2020 but may be extended dependant on assessed risk of community exposure to COVID-19. Risk will be regularly assessed based on public health information and restrictions may be aligned with existing provincial orders and closures that are in force for the protection of the general public.

Q. How will the community be informed?

A. Communications and updates will be provided to the community via door-to-door community notices, the Garden River website, email and GR official social media channels.



ESSENTIAL

GARDEN RIVER FIRST NATION
VEHICLE REGISTRATION TAG



Vehicle registered to an
Occupational/Essential Service

ON RESERVE

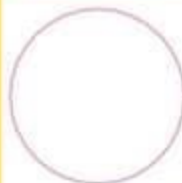
GARDEN RIVER FIRST NATION
VEHICLE REGISTRATION TAG



Vehicle registered to a GR
registered citizen or community
member living on reserve

OFF RESERVE

GARDEN RIVER FIRST NATION
VEHICLE REGISTRATION TAG



Vehicle registered to a
GR registered citizen living
off reserve