

2020 04 22

Dear Keeyask Workers:

RE: KEYASK PROJECTS COVID-19 RESPONSE

The fact that we are continuing to build safely today, is a testament to **the extraordinary workers, their sacrifice, and the sacrifice of their families & loved ones. The health and well-being of our workers remains our first priority.**

Like everywhere else, the COVID-19 virus has impacted the Keeyask project. On March 11, COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic and our project priorities instantly pivoted. Of critical importance was preventing COVID-19 from getting to site, spreading at site, and spreading to/from local communities.

Between March 11 and 17, Manitoba Hydro, implemented a series of measures following the guidelines and directives of Manitoba Health, Seniors, and Active Living. These included tightened travel restrictions, additional cleaning in the camp, and multiple protocols related to increasing physical distancing in the camp & construction areas. In addition, protocols were also put in place to screen any individuals who exhibited any symptoms of illness.

Any worker with symptoms was required to see the on-site nurse-practitioner for assessment, using Provincial health authorities' criteria. If they were determined to need further COVID-19 assessment, they were moved to a holding room in a dorm set aside for that purpose. They were then transported off-site - to their home jurisdiction - as soon as could be arranged. There were nine individuals who met the criteria for follow-up assessment and were removed from site. Six were tested (and three were deemed by their home jurisdictions to not require COVID-19 testing). None tested positive for COVID-19.

By March 17, it was becoming evident that we were facing the decision of finding a way to continue work at the project in a safe, effective manner or shutting down the project. (Shutting down the site would mean going to a 'care and maintenance' mode that would require up to 250 workers without advancing construction.)

On March 17, there were just under 1,400 healthy workers at site. In just over a 24-hour period, the entire workforce was canvassed, and workers were asked to volunteer to stay for an extended period that may last up to 8-weeks. During this planned extended period, regularly scheduled rotations of 3 weeks in and 1 week out would stop to further prevent the risk of COVID-19 from getting into the project site. Additionally, this 8-week period would allow Manitoba Hydro time to evaluate how the COVID-19 situation would evolve across the country.

On March 21st, roughly 700 workers chose to remain at site to continue advancing the critical work to bring the first 2 units into service. (In a few cases, workers who had volunteered to stay were notified that they were not required due to unavailability of work with the now reduced workforce.) These 700 individuals, 78% of whom are Manitobans, are shining examples of what can be accomplished in the heart of a crisis. Your actions and decision to remain on site has prevented substantial additional

project costs for Manitobans. Choosing to remain on-site for up to eight weeks is a sacrifice not only by you, but also by your families and loved ones at home.

Since March 21st, no workers have been allowed to return to or join the camp. This solution has made Keeyask one of the safest workplaces in North America during our crisis. However, despite the isolation, workers have still been required to adhere to strict COVID-19 policies. To facilitate physical distancing requirements, all camp amenities were closed, including the gym, theatre, lounge, cafeteria, and all other recreational open spaces. The closure of the cafeteria meant that take-out meals had to be eaten in your rooms. Closure of all other recreational space meant that you did not socialize as you normally would have.

On April 1, Manitoba Hydro applied for an exemption to partially re-open the gym, cafeteria, and lounge; an exemption that – if approved - would still have to follow the current enhanced health protocols at site. The application was made in consideration for the well-being and mental health of the workers at Keeyask. The partial re-opening of Keeyask facilities - including the gym and cafeteria - occurred fourteen days after enacting the camp's isolation and in light of zero positive COVID-19 cases. (The lounge facility is currently not open and is unlikely to open due to resource limitations.)

Manitoba Hydro's Respect campaign, running at the Keeyask site for the last four years, is a campaign to recognize the unique differences of a diverse Canadian and international workforce that is building Keeyask. Its purpose is to drive a culture of respect, and to challenge each and every individual to think about how they want to be treated and how they treat others. This has reinforced behaviors of compassion, responsibility, teamwork, and resiliency. The workers who chose to stay and continue to build are extraordinary examples of all of these qualities.

Safety and well-being are Manitoba Hydro's first and foremost priority. **Manitoba Hydro is continually monitoring the health and well-being of the workforce, and working with our contractors, their site supervision, shop stewards, and unions.** It's a team approach and everyone has the same goals. Days of rest are being provided as required to support the well-being of workers.

In support of ensuring the safety and well-being of the volunteers who remained at Keeyask, Manitoba Hydro is sharing the protocols that are being used to bring the first movement of new workers into the camp, which is planned for the end of this week. These new workers are cooks who reside in Winnipeg, Thompson, and Gillam. These protocols have been reviewed and endorsed by the Provincial health authorities, a group of people who continue to provide sound, cautious, and steadfast guidance. We are also comparing notes with other remote projects across Canada to ensure we are taking all reasonable and practical steps.

Next week we will be reviewing upcoming protocols and plans as the end of the 8-week extended period approaches.

These are extremely challenging times and include a great deal of uncertainty. These times show us the often-overlooked realities that exist in our world, our limitations as people, and our vast potential to work together as we find ways to fight COVID-19. Manitoba Hydro is committed to take a very cautious approach and continues to work with the Provincial chief health officer to minimize the risk of COVID-19 at Keeyask.

We are extremely proud of you, our team, and the safe and creative solution you have found in this extremely challenging environment. We will continue to put your well-being and safety first.

We also recognize that the surrounding communities have an obligation to protect their people which include many of our great workers. We will continue to inform the four partner communities of our plans, and to provide them with the information they need to manage COVID-19 in their own communities.

For the many extraordinary workers who are currently not at the project site. We still need you and will be looking for you as we plan for a shift change in May.

I want to once again thank you, and your families, for their sacrifice in these unprecedented times.

Yours truly,



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