



Territorial Acknowledgement Guidelines

Globally we are becoming more aware of the real histories of our nations. We are discovering the culture, the histories and the identities of the Indigenous peoples of these lands. As we move forward, we acknowledge the importance of the First Peoples’ and the often traumatic experiences they had and their descendants continue to navigate.

One way for us, as a predominantly white community, to improve our allyship with Indigenous peoples is to ensure that we acknowledge and recognize their existence and their lands. The Territorial Acknowledgement statement provides us with an opportunity to pause and remember whose land we benefit from.

It is important to note that Land Acknowledgements and Territorial Acknowledgements differ in the following ways:

| TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT | LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT |
|--|--|
| Acknowledges and expresses gratitude for the Peoples whose territory we are on | - Acknowledges and expresses gratitude for the natural world and various parts of creation |
| - Names the Nations that were here first | - Often similar to Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address |
| - Recognizes their traditional knowledge | - Can be blended with Territorial Acknowledgement |
| - Recognizes their ongoing presence and influence | |
| - Can be blended with a Land Acknowledgement | |

Purpose:

To provide guidelines, best practices and structure to how Territorial Acknowledgements are written and presented. Most importantly, this document will serve as an educational resource in creating a better understanding of and respect for the First Peoples of all lands combined with actionable steps towards reconciliation and transformative experience at all events. In essence, **the purpose of these statements and partnerships are to be RESTORATIVE AND ACTIONABLE.**



Protocol:

*“When working on or within the **traditional territory** of a **First Nation** there is **protocol** to follow. It can be customary between one First Nation and another to acknowledge the host First Nation Peoples and their traditional territory at the outset of any meeting...it follows then, that if you want to [work] with a First Nation, one of the best ways is to show respect to the Nation by following traditional territory protocol.”[Joseph, 2019]*

Sharing history is an important component of increasing education for all present. More importantly, it is something we should do as settlers in this country. As we read the acknowledgement and share what has been learned we can help recognize the past and build more awareness for the future. At the start of all events, the host or leader should follow the protocol and begin with a First Nation representative welcoming other First Peoples to their territory. Following that, a Territorial Acknowledgement must be made by a settler (non-First Peoples) representative acknowledging the First People’s territory the event is taking place on and a commitment to be good guests in this land outlining specifics if possible. It’s very important to find out what the expectations are of guests from the First Peoples in your area.

“If we think of territorial acknowledgements as sites of potential disruption, they can be transformative acts that to some extent undo Indigenous erasure. I believe this is true as long as these acknowledgements discomfit both those speaking and hearing the words. The fact of Indigenous presence should force non-Indigenous peoples to confront their own place on these lands.” – [âpihtawikosisân, 2016]

Steps and Actions:

- 1) Reflect on and research the following questions:
 - a) Why is this acknowledgement happening?
 - b) How does this acknowledgement relate to the event or work you are doing?
 - c) What is the history of this territory? What are the impacts of colonialism here?
 - d) What is your relationship to this territory? How did you come to be here?
 - e) What intentions do you have to disrupt and dismantle colonialism beyond this territory acknowledgement?

- 2) Do some research on what Indigenous organizations or groups are in your area. When learning about the lands that are being used it is critical to complete accurate research. The best practice would be to reach out to a member of a local Indigenous Nation to learn more about the history of the people and land whenever possible. We recognize that access to these nation members may be difficult or impossible to gain. If direct contact is not possible, then evidence-based research sites are the next best step. Sites recommended may include; city, county or provincial visitor center websites, or the local tribal nation sites. After you’ve done the research, discuss these with First Nations peoples in your league and get their feedback on which would be best to connect with.

*IMPORTANT NOTE: it is respectful to learn the correct pronunciations beforehand



- 3) A member of the hosting league should connect with an organization of their choice for learning opportunities, establishing a genuine relationship and as a learning resource for writing the Territorial Acknowledgement.
- 4) We should serve the Indigenous communities we share treaty lands with and create space for Indigenous business, nonprofits and agencies. This could be an invitation to participate in the event, a free table to share or promote their agency, information on the local Indigenous agencies in programs, etc.
- 5) Endeavor to maintain the relationship with the partner organization throughout the year and continue to support the First Peoples in your area.

Example:

“We acknowledge that our event is currently taking place on lands that were stolen from and sacred to the _____ Nation. The _____ Nation are the original inhabitants and caretakers of this land. We will now take a moment to honor and pay our respects to them, the ancestors who have gone and the members still present.”

Resources for further learning and action:

[First Nation Protocol on Traditional Territory](#)

[Our home on native land](#)

[Aboriginal Sport Circle](#)

[Sport for Life | Developing physical literacy and delivering quality sport](#)

[Showing Up for Racial Injustice Toronto, <https://surjtoronto.com/education-resources>](#)

[Native Women's Association of Canada \(NWAC\)](#)

[Assembly of First Nations](#)

[Congress of Aboriginal Peoples | Congrès des peuples autochtones](#)

[Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami](#)

[Metis National Council](#)

[The National Association of Friendship Centres \(NAFC\)](#)

[Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada](#)

[Delivering on Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action](#)



References & Credits

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Âpihtawikosisân. "Beyond Territorial Acknowledgments." Sept. 2016.

<https://apihtawikosisan.com/2016/09/beyond-territorial-acknowledgments/>

Joseph, Bob. "First Nation Protocol on Traditional Territory." Accessed September 21, 2016.

<http://www.ictinc.ca/first-nation-protocol-on-traditional-territory>.