



Tsi Nahò:ten Karihwanákere Nó:nen'k

PRESS RELEASE

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Update on lead testing at the Kahnawà:ke Survival School grounds

For Immediate Release

(Kahnawake – 27 Onerahtókha/April 2026) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke Terrapure Working Group wishes to update the community concerning lead testing results at the Kahnawà:ke Survival School (KSS) school grounds. Since the last update, the Kahnawà:ke Environment Protection Office (KEPO) has collected additional samples of sap and has also completed sampling of sap collection equipment.

Findings from this sampling have determined that lead concentrations in the maple sap range between 2.5 and 3 µg/L in samples collected directly from the tree using plastic spiles (taps) and 1.3 – 10 µg/L in samples collected from plastic buckets. These levels are consistent with previous findings and demonstrate the presence of lead in the maple sap from the trees on the KSS grounds. Results of maple syrup samples have not yet been received, but the standard for lead concentrations in maple syrup in Quebec, Ontario, and other jurisdictions is 250 µg/L. When sap is boiled down to syrup, the concentration of lead increases. We therefore must wait for the results from the maple syrup to determine if maple syrup produced at KSS can be recommended for consumption.

KEPO testing has also detected higher levels of lead in maple sap collected from some metal buckets on site (range 3.1 – 41 µg/L). Working with the Centre for Indigenous Peoples Nutrition and Environment (based out of McGill University), KEPO analyzed empty buckets, bucket lids, spiles, and evaporators. KEPO found that approximately half of the buckets and lids tested contained lead, as did all of the metal spiles. The evaporator and other equipment within the sugar shack did not contain lead. KSS has removed all of the collection equipment from the site, and KEPO will be systematically testing it and disposing of all equipment that contains any detectable level of lead. KSS has committed to replacing this equipment.

Any community members that are concerned about their own collection systems can bring their buckets, lids, or spiles to KEPO for analysis.

KEPO has also acquired an air quality monitor capable of detecting lead and will be working to have this installed on-site in the coming days. Additionally, a complete soil sampling campaign will be conducted across the old and new campuses. The Working Group continues to seek collaboration with other jurisdictions, external agencies, and experts.

This is an evolving situation and the Working Group will provide additional updates as they become available. For more information, please contact mckmedia@mck.ca. To have your equipment tested, please contact KEPO at 450-635-0600 or environmentprotection@mck.ca.

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About the Terrapure Working Group

The TerraPure Working Group is an internal Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) working group established to coordinate MCK's response to environmental and public health concerns related to TerraPure, particularly following spills and contamination issues affecting Kahnawà:ke. The Working Group is comprised of representatives from the Council of Chiefs, the Office of the Council of Chiefs, KEPO, Legal Services, and Public Relations.