

DRAFT Land Acknowledgement Guide

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Chances are, you've seen or heard a land acknowledgement at some point in the past few years, but maybe you don't completely understand why land acknowledgements are important. That's understandable—we can't know what we weren't taught, right? So, here's a document that will help guide you with what you need to know. This document is meant to provide guidance and answer questions regarding how to conduct land acknowledgements for Curling Alberta, curling centres and curling event organizers at the beginning of meetings or events.

What is a land acknowledgement?

Land acknowledgements are based on an old tradition or protocol carried out by Indigenous communities in Canada. It is an honest and historically accurate way to recognize the traditional First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit territories of a particular location and is intended for guests to show their respect and pay homage to the Indigenous community and land they are visiting.

Why Are Land Acknowledgements Necessary?

Inspired by the 94 recommended calls to action contained in the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), land acknowledgements are a necessary first step toward honouring the original occupants of a place. They help Canadians recognize and respect Indigenous peoples' inherent kinship beliefs when it comes to the land, especially since those beliefs were restricted for so long. Land acknowledgements raise awareness of Indigenous presence and recognize the history of colonialism and harms done by settlers to Indigenous Peoples.

A huge part of why land acknowledgements are so important is the recognition of the ongoing genocide and repression of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, which spans centuries. The injustices carried out against Indigenous communities include: broken treaty relationships, residential and day schools, the Sixties Scoop, and continued attempts by all levels of government and religious groups to control Indigenous communities by legislating against use of their own languages, cultural practices, dress and lifestyle. Generations of Indigenous Peoples have been traumatized, oppressed and discriminate against. To move towards Reconciliation, the land acknowledgement may seem small, but it is very meaningful.

How do I perform a Land Acknowledgement?

The goal is to practice land acknowledgements in a meaningful and genuine way, which means, you should do your research and reflect on why you are doing it and what your end goal is. As you are reading this guide, it is a great first step to begin your learning process, but there is still more work to do.

Step 1: Research

- The Indigenous land the event is taking place on,
- The settlement history of the land and related treaties,
- Indigenous words and phrases, including correct pronunciation

- you can learn the pronunciation by: respectfully asking someone from that nation; the nation's website "About" page may have a phonetic pronunciation; or call the nation or Friendship Centre to ask or listen to their afterhours voicemail recording.
- Existing relationships between you/your curling centre and local Indigenous communities,
- Reach out to your local Friendship Centre, ask them any questions you might have and if they can provide you with help on how to complete a land acknowledgement.

Step 2: Decide what language to use in the statement

- Use the appropriate terms such as Indigenous, First Nations, Metis, and Inuit,
- Use terms to highlight past actions that disrupted Indigenous life (e.g. colonization, settler, assimilation, stolen land etc.),
- Check that your past, present and future tenses are appropriate - Indigenous Peoples are still here, they are not in the past.

Step 3: Write the acknowledgement

- Name the Indigenous territories,
 - Use this link to a [Native Land map](#) where you can find this information
- Explain why you are acknowledging the land,
- Personalize the acknowledgement by relating your experience or history,
- Address the relevance of Indigenous rights to the subject matter of your event or meeting.

Don't forget that land acknowledgements are also a learning opportunity for those that are listening to it and speaking from the heart is a good way to show how meaningful it is and that it is not just to fulfill a "checkbox". There are many good ways to share a land acknowledgement, but there isn't one specific template that will always work, figure out what works and resonates with you. Consider this as a first step towards greater understanding of the issues surrounding Indigeneity in Canada and active Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

The following include various examples of land acknowledgements. These are not meant to be scripts, but guides you can use when writing your acknowledgement.

Example 1:

Before beginning this meeting, I would like to share some truths about myself and about the place that many of us call home: I am not Indigenous, rather I am of settler-colonial ancestry. Although my heritage extends to _____ (England, France, Ireland, etc.) _____, I - like many other settler people - have benefited greatly from living on Turtle Island. As a visitor on this land, I have an important responsibility to acknowledge the grounds on which we are privileged to gather in:

We are located in the traditional and treaty territory of the _____. I believe that it is not only important to recognize the _____ for their care for, and teachings about the earth

All people living in Canada - whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous - are treaty people with their own set of rights and responsibilities. Anyone who is Indigenous or non-Indigenous can share a land acknowledgement. The acknowledgement can also be written and posted in physical and online spaces for people to view at any given time.

How should I react during a land acknowledgement?

Be mindful of the thoughts and unconscious biases that might go through your head when you hear or see a land acknowledgement. This will require digging deep and it may not be easy, but be honest with yourself about your first reactions when you hear a land acknowledgement. What we hear may contradict what we were taught previously and may be faced with the injustices that have and are still happening here in Canada. By gaining a thorough understanding of why acknowledgements are important we will be able to keep an open mind and reflect on what is being said in a meaningful way.

What else do I need to know?

Listen and learn. Indigenous Peoples are healing and each person's healing path is different. You'll hear a perspective that you've never heard before that relates first-hand to centuries of oppression, but also a story of strength and resurgence. We can effect real change by pushing ourselves to engage in conversations with each other.

(INTERNAL) Resources/Notes:

This resource provides an introduction to land acknowledgements and a great starting point:

<https://locallove.ca/issues/what-are-land-acknowledgements-and-why-do-they-matter/#.YAn1avHYrq5>

Alberta is home to 48 First Nations or Bands

<https://www.trentu.ca/teaching/how-do-land-acknowledgment>

<https://www.amnesty.ca/blog/activism-skills-land-and-territory-acknowledgement/>

<https://www.caut.ca/content/guide-acknowledging-first-peoples-traditional-territory>

<https://engineerscanada.ca/sites/default/files/2021-11/Land%20Acknowledgement%20-%20EN%20-%20November%202021%20Update.pdf>