



Wikwemikong Tribal Police Service Community Update

Summer Newsletter 2025

A Message from the Chief of Police

Dear Wikwemkoong Community,

As the warm season returns, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for your continued support and partnership with our police service.

Over the past few months, our team has been working hard to respond to calls for service, support individuals and families in need, and deliver culturally sensitive, community-based policing. We remain deeply committed to transparency and accountability, and this newsletter is one way we aim to keep you informed and engaged.

We are excited to announce the addition of two new constables to the WTPS team, and the well-earned promotion of Tammy Duffy from Staff Sergeant to Inspector. These staffing updates are part of a broader shift to a new deployment model designed to improve how we manage workloads, respond to service demands, and enhance the overall support we provide to the community.

In line with our 2025 priorities, we have also welcomed a dedicated Wellness Coordinator to our team. This new role reflects our commitment to the health and well-being of our officers, staff, and their families. By bringing in an experienced health specialist, we are launching programs and initiatives aimed at helping our team navigate the unique pressures of policing with resilience and support.

Additionally, we have formally requested support from the provincial government to launch a Community Safety HUB in Wikwemkoong. This

initiative would bring together police, health, social services, and community partners to better support individuals at risk and reduce repeat offending. We are hopeful that the provincial and federal government will recognize the impact this model can have and invest in prevention efforts.

We'd like to remind the community that the WTPS Online Reporting System is now active. Brochures and guides have been mailed out to assist residents in using the platform, which was developed in partnership with Rubicon Inc. The system, found at wtps.ca, enables citizens to report non-emergency matters directly to police online, improving accessibility and service delivery. We're proud to share that Rubicon has recognized WTPS as the first Indigenous police service in Canada to launch a community-centred online reporting system, marking an important step forward in modern, responsive policing.

We continue to be guided by our partnerships with Elders, youth programs, local agencies, the Police Services Board and Chief and Council. Your well-being is our highest priority, and together, we are working to make Wikwemkoong the safest community in Ontario.

Chi Miigwech for your ongoing support of the Wikwemikong Tribal Police Service and all of the work we continue to do.

Sincerely,

Ron Gignac
Chief of Police,
Wikwemikong Tribal Police Service

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Strengthening Our Response to Trafficking and Organized Crime

WTPS is actively participating in the 2025–2026 Provincial Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy, providing access to vital intelligence and enabling joint anti-trafficking operations.

Working at full capacity, our team is addressing frontline needs, community safety, and organized crime through partnerships with the OPP and UCCM Anishnaabe Police to carry out joint enforcement efforts and marine patrols.

These efforts disrupt trafficking, firearms, and drug activity to keep our community safe.

Victim Services Grant Funding

WTPS is proud to share that it has secured funding through the 2025 Victim Support Grant. In partnership with Manitoulin Northshore Victim Services, this initiative will strengthen support for victims and their families throughout Wiikwemkoong and Manitoulin Island. WTPS is also working alongside local community organizations and neighbouring police services to provide training and educational opportunities that build capacity in responding to victims of crime.

The grant will fund a range of victim-focused supports, including:

- Community presentations and guest speaker events
- Assistance with transportation, clothing, food, and communication needs
- The creation of a welcoming, trauma-informed interview room for victims and witnesses at WTPS headquarters

This initiative reflects our commitment to ensuring that victims receive compassionate, accessible, and culturally safe support at every stage of their journey.

The Cost of Crime: Offender Management Program Update

Last year, there were 5,165 calls for service. Of that, 180 repeat offenders were responsible for 1,044 calls to police. Responding to these repeat offenders cost an estimated \$2.2 million annually, not including healthcare or social impacts. To address this, WTPS has launched an Offender Management Program to reduce reoffending by directing officers to proactively check in on offenders to ensure compliance with their court conditions. We're proud to say the program is well underway and showing results.

By working closely with health, social service, and justice partners, we're taking a proactive, collaborative approach to reduce reoffending, support individuals at risk, and make better use of community resources.

ATV Safety in the Spotlight: A Call for Caution This Summer

As the warmer months bring increased outdoor activity, all-terrain vehicle (ATV) incidents have emerged as a pressing safety concern in Wiikwemkoong. Although the overall volume of ATV-related calls remained steady, the nature of these calls has become significantly more severe:

- 2025 (January–June):
55 complaints, 2 fatal collisions (3 deaths, 6 injuries), 25 reports of aggressive driving
- 2024 (Full Year):
80 complaints, 7 collisions (5 injuries, no deaths)

The rise in aggressive driving reports in 2025 marks a new category of concern, accounting for nearly a third of all ATV-related calls this year. This likely reflects increased community awareness and reporting but also indicates a shift toward more dangerous operating behavior. For WTPS, this trend reinforces the need for:

- Targeted patrols and visibility on ATV routes.
- Community outreach, especially in schools and youth groups.
- Public education campaigns to reduce risky behavior.

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Rider Safety Reminders:

- ✓ Always wear a helmet and appropriate protective gear.
- ✓ You must have a valid Driver's License to drive an ATV when not on private property.
- ✓ Ride only where permitted and be mindful of others using the trails.
- ✓ Never ride under the influence—your safety depends on your full attention.
- ✓ Ensure youth riders are properly supervised.



If You See Something, Say Something

We encourage all community members to use our Online Reporting Tool for non-emergency issues like property damage, lost items, or minor theft. It's quick, easy, and available 24/7 at wtps.ca.

If you see suspicious activity or know about a crime but want to stay anonymous, contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477) or crimestoppers.ca.

Even small tips can help stop crime, protect others, and keep our community safe. What you share could be the missing piece. Your tip could help prevent harm or resolve an ongoing investigation.

Summer Safety on the Land and Water

As many of us head out to enjoy the land, water, and trails, please keep these important safety reminders in mind:

Swimming:

- ✓ Keep a close watch on children near water—safety starts with staying present.
- ✓ Children that can't swim, keep them within an arms length from you.
- ✓ Be safe when swimming, know the area, and go with a buddy.

Camping & Hiking:

- ✓ Tell someone your plans before you leave, including when you expect to return.
- ✓ Bring plenty of water, proper clothing, and a fully charged phone or radio.
- ✓ Be bear aware: store food securely and clean up cooking areas.

Boating:

- ✓ Always wear a life jacket.
- ✓ Do not consume alcohol or drugs while operating a vessel.
- ✓ Check weather conditions before heading out and carry safety equipment.

General Tips:

- ✓ Watch for signs of dehydration or heat exhaustion.
- ✓ Respect fire bans and ensure campfires are completely out before leaving.
- ✓ Be mindful of wildlife and sacred areas.

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WTPS in the Community

Annual General Meeting: The WTPS executive, board and community leaders attended the WTPS Annual General Meeting to discuss policing priorities and plan strategies to better support the community.

Community Open House: During National Police Week, officers hosted a Community Open House that welcomed residents of all ages, including students from local schools, with fun activities and prize raffles to help strengthen community connections.

Earth Day Community Clean-up: On Earth Day, officers joined the community clean-up and handed out positivity tickets to youth who contributed to keeping our community clean.

ATV Safety Presentations: Officers held a large ATV safety presentation and demonstration at our high school in June. We had our WTPS officers, and the OPP subject matter experts present ATV safety tips and driving skill applications, along with a dialogue in active participation from the students.

Easter Celebration at Pontiac School: Officers visited Pontiac School during the Easter season and had the honour of judging the student-decorated classroom doors.

Upcoming Community Police Events

August Civic Weekend: WTPS will host a booth and have officers present at the Wiikwemkoong Pow Wow to share safety information and engage with community members.

Summer 2025 (Ongoing): WTPS is conducting ATV patrols and school presentations on ATV safety, along with a boater safety session led by a subject matter expert.

Summer 2025 (Ongoing): In partnership with the RCMP, Canadian Coast Guard, and O.P.P. SAVE team, WTPS is participating in marine and ATV patrols focused on border integrity, drug interdiction, and ATV safety in and around the Territory and surrounding islands.

October 2025: WTPS and Manitoulin North Shore Victim Services will co-host a community event supporting victims of crime. Local agencies will be available to connect with residents of Wiikwemikoong and Manitoulin Island.

More information coming soon: This fall, WTPS will host a guest speaker seminar on resiliency, recovery, and perseverance, as part of its wellness and education initiatives.

Community Safety by the Numbers: Mid-Year Reflection

Crime is rising in 2025, with notable increases in sexual assaults (up 122%), property crime (up 16%), and drug-related incidents (up 29%). While these numbers are concerning, they also reflect that our community is stepping forward and reporting more.

WTPS has responded with strengthened enforcement, laying over twice as many charges as this time last year, and launching targeted programs like the Offender Management initiative and joint efforts with surrounding police forces. These actions are helping us manage the increase while supporting long-term safety, accountability, and healing in Wiikwemkoong.