

## MEDIA ADVISORY



### K-W Oktoberfest Partners with REES for Safe Reporting

**October 10, 2024 – KITCHENER, ON** – [Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest](#) is partnering with [REES](#) (Respect, Educate, Empower Survivors) as the first Ontario festival to provide online reporting for unwanted sexualized behaviors.

REES offers an online platform for reporting unwanted sexualized behaviors that gathers critical data and insights about where harm may be occurring so that event partners can develop ongoing prevention strategies. REES also provides information about community-based resources such as sexual assault centers, healthcare and other support services.

“Unwelcome sexual actions have a significant impact on the perceptions of personal safety at festivals,” shares Tracy Van Kalsbeek, Executive Director of K-W Oktoberfest. “With the data REES collects, we will gain important insight to help us minimize risk and develop ongoing strategies.”

There is limited data about sexual assaults at events in Canada, however a [2018 YouGov study](#) in the UK found that one in five (22%) of all festival goers and 30% of female festival attendees have experienced some form of unwanted sexual behaviour at a UK festival.

With the adoption of REES, event organizers can gain insights into the experiences of attendees during Oktoberfest and use this data to inform their prevention efforts.” says Mary Lobson, founder of REES. “Having clear reporting options and access to resource information is critical for survivors. We are proud to partner with K-W Oktoberfest to reduce barriers to reporting and lead change in the Ontario festival ecosystem.”

REES can be accessed online anytime for incidents occurring at the festival from the K-W Oktoberfest website here: <https://www.oktoberfest.ca/nomeansnein/>

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#### About [Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest](#)

The first Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest was celebrated in 1969 at Concordia Club in Kitchener, organized by a group of dedicated founders. The keg was tapped and history was made. Since then, Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest has developed its own traditions, becoming one of the largest Bavarian Festivals outside of Germany. Tens of thousands of visitors celebrate annually in our Festhallen, at local restaurants and by attending one of our many family and cultural events. More than just biergartens, Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest is committed to supporting the cultural, economic and social vitality of Waterloo Region, bringing millions of dollars in economic benefit to the Region each year. *Oktoberfest Cares* provides funding for charitable partners and supports Festival initiatives that enrich our community such as the Onkel Hans Food Drive and keep admission costs low or free for favourites including the Women of the Year celebration and family-friendly events like KIDtoberfest, Thanksgiving Day Parade and Christkinderfest. For more information visit [www.oktoberfest.ca](http://www.oktoberfest.ca).

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