

2SLGBTQI Protest Safety Guide



Introduction

Anti-2SLGBTQI hate in Canada is on the rise in Canada.

We see it in the anti-trans policies and policy proposals emerging provincially and federally and in the rising rates of hate crimes, hate speech, and other instances of hate. We also see it in the development of coordinated anti-trans protests in cities across Canada. Many members of 2SLGBTQI and allied communities have joined together to organize and attend counter-protests. Drawing on the [Pride Safety Toolkit](#) developed by Egale Canada and Fierté Canada Pride as well as the [Guide for Pride Defenders](#) prepared by the Canadian Anti-Hate Network, this resource is designed to help counter-protestors keep themselves and one another as safe as possible.

Before the counter-protest

- Make sure you're aware of what groups or organizations are organizing the counter-protest. Pay attention to any social media, mailing lists, or similar forms of communication they use to communicate about the event.
- Plan how you're going to arrive and leave. If the counter-protest is in an area that is unfamiliar to you, consider visiting beforehand or taking some time to look at a map to get oriented. You should try to be aware of entrance and exit points and any physical barriers like fences.
- Pack light, but pack right: Remember water, snacks, ID, and potentially first aid supplies.
- Also research the group that is organizing the hateful protest. Make sure you're aware of the hate group's plan for their protest – for example, they will likely have shared their planned beginning and end times, any planned speeches, etc.
- Consider how visible you would like to be as a counter-protestor. Wearing or rainbow colours and carrying signs and banners can differentiate you from the hate group and make it clear to allies that you are part of the counter-protest. On the other hand, some people would prefer not to visibly be a part of the counter-protest (other than through their presence).



**Additional
Safety
Resources**



Pride Safety Toolkits
Egale Canada
egale.ca/safetytoolkits



Guide For Pride Defenders
Canadian Anti-Hate Network
antihate.ca/pride_defence_guide



During the counter-protest

- Go with a friend or group. Do not go alone, if possible – there is strength in numbers. It can be difficult to meet up with groups at large protests. Consider meeting ahead of time or outside of the space where people will be protesting.
- Don't film or photograph counter-protestors unless there is a good reason to document what is happening. If you do, don't post those photographs or videos online.
- Wear a mask. In addition to protecting your group from the transmission of diseases, a mask will help protect your identity in the likely case that photos and videos of the counter-protest are shared online by hate groups. You can also consider whether you want to take other steps to conceal your identity, including wearing nondescript clothing and covering your hair.

Know your rights in interactions with police:

- ✓ You can't be prevented from attending a peaceful protest.
- ✓ If the police approach you to ask you questions, you have the right to refuse to answer, even if you've been detained or arrested. You have the right to walk away unless you're being detained or arrested, in which case you have the right to know why.
- ✓ If you have been detained or arrested, you must provide your name and date of birth if the police ask you.
- ✓ Protesting is a legal right, but police can still arrest protesters. Some common charges at protests are:
 1. Assault (often in the case of clashes between protesters and counter-protestors, or between protesters and police);
 2. Mischief, including interfering with someone's use of property;
 3. Rioting, causing a disturbance, and unlawful assembly (if protestors or counter-protestors become very loud, aggressive, or disorderly).

If you witness or experience a hate-motivated crime:

- ⚠ In an emergency, contact 9-1-1. For TTY access (Telephone Device for the Deaf), press the space bar announcer key repeatedly until a response is received.
- ⚠ It is always the victim's choice whether or not to report a hate crime to police. If you do witness a hate-motivated crime, for example, a person being harassed or targeted with slurs, you should write down everything you saw and heard in case you are asked to provide a statement at a later date or if the victim needs your notes.
- ⚠ If you are personally targeted by a hate incident, crime, or other form of discrimination, get to a safe place as soon as you can. If you're physically injured, consider seeking medical attention right away. Consider whether you need to call someone you trust to help you get home or somewhere else where you feel safe.
- ⚠ Supports for victims of hate crime will vary depending on where you live. Often, you can access helplines or community resources that can help you find the support you need. Many people who have survived incidents of hate benefit from counselling or similar mental health care.



After the counter-protest

- Consider debriefing with the people you went with or with groups you're affiliated with. Different people will have different physical and emotional reactions to confronting hateful protests. Try to make space for people to share their experiences and support one another.
- Stay in touch with allies, because these anti-2SLGBTQI protests are gaining steam and the fight is ongoing.