

Safety Tips for You and Your Team

Service canadien du
renseignement de sécurité

About the Guide

Congratulations on deciding to run for election.

Engaging with the public and working on a campaign can be a very positive experience. It can also create demands on candidates and their support teams from public and media exposure.

Planning ahead for your personal safety and campaign security is an essential part of running for office – a proactive safety plan helps protect you, your team, and your community.

This guide is a resource for anyone thinking about running for office at any level in the National Capital Region. It offers practical safety information and guidance on where to turn for help.



Consider Your Entire Team

No one runs for office alone. It's important to consider family members, friends, and staff who will be supporting you. For most people, there will be no impact to personal safety; however, some candidates and their teams may unfortunately experience unacceptable behaviour.



Unacceptable Behaviour: When and How to Report

Please reach out for assistance if you experience any of the following:

- Verbal abuse and intimidation at events or in public spaces
- Hate-motivated behaviour
- Online threats, doxing (publication of personal information online), and/or cyberbullying
- Vandalism or property damage (including to election signs)
- Stalking or persistent unwanted attention
- Physical threats or acts of violence

For an Immediate/Occurring Threat,
Always Call 9-1-1

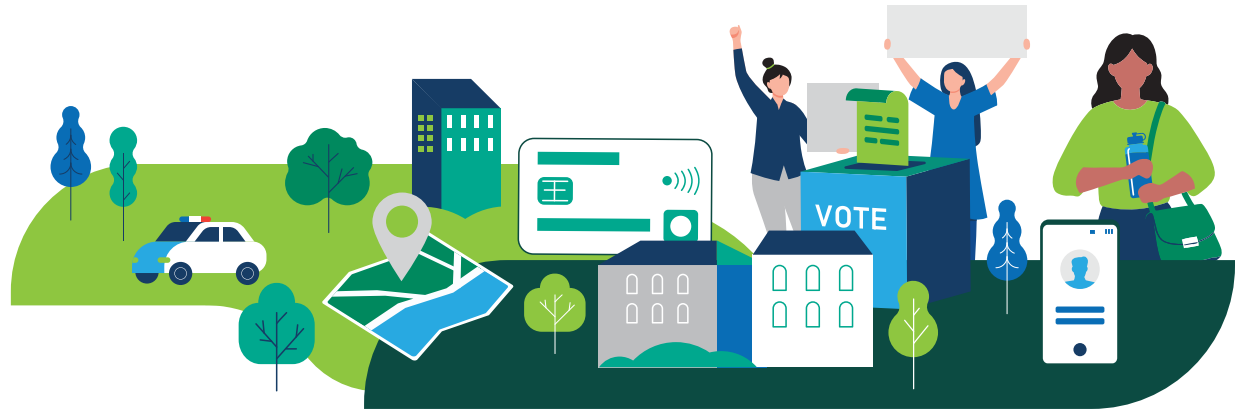
The Ottawa Police Service and the Service de police de la Ville de Gatineau are actively monitoring threats, investigating reports of criminal behaviour, and working to hold offenders accountable. They can also be reached at the following non-emergency numbers:



Ottawa (613-236-1222)

Gatineau (819-246-0222)

Reporting isn't overreacting – it's the smart thing to do. Law enforcement and community partners take these matters seriously and are committed to protecting everyone's safety.



Safety Guidance

Canvassing and Election Safety Tips

Keep a list of everyone working with you, including contact details, emergency contacts, and when and where each person is canvassing — and with whom. Use a buddy system: always work in pairs or teams when canvassing or putting up signs.

Please follow these best practices to stay safe and respectful in the community.

Before You Go:

- Know the rules: Review local laws about canvassing and election sign placement.
- Share your plans: Let someone know your route and expected return time.
- Think ahead: Have a plan in case you feel uncomfortable (e.g. a code word or quick exit strategy).
- Dress for comfort: Wear clothing and shoes suitable for walking.
- Bring the basics: Phone, water, ID, sunscreen and a flashlight if you'll be out near dusk.

While Out:

- Respect property: Stay off lawns and out of gated areas unless invited.
- Keep space: After knocking, take a step back. Stay outside, even if welcomed in.

- Be courteous: If someone isn't interested, thank them and move on.
- Stay aware: If you feel unsafe or notice aggression, leave calmly. If you notice a person or vehicle following you, go to a public place (e.g., a store, fire station, or well-populated area) and call for help. If possible, note their appearance and any vehicle details.
- Dogs: If a dog approaches, stand still and avoid making eye contact. Do not run, as this may trigger the dog's chase instinct. Once the dog has lost interest, back away slowly until it's out of sight.
- Report issues: Document and report any unacceptable behaviour to your team lead or police, if needed.
- Trust your instincts.

When You're Done:

- Check in: Let your team know you've returned safely.
- Share concerns: If you saw or experienced anything concerning, report it right away.



Online and In-Person Safety Tips

Online and Social Media Security:

- Protect personal info: Avoid posting your home address, phone number, or personal details about you or your family. Check sites like Canada 411 and remove public listings.
- Review privacy settings: Set social media accounts (yours and your team's) to private where possible – especially those of family members and children.
- Keep devices updated: Install updates on your phone, computer, and apps; they include important security fixes.
- Use campaign-specific tools: Create separate phone numbers, email accounts, and social media profiles for campaign work.
- Strengthen login security: Use strong passwords and turn on multi-factor authentication (MFA).
- Manage interactions: Turn off comments or explain that direct messages (DMs) aren't monitored regularly.

- Be careful with public Wi-Fi: It usually isn't secure, which means someone could steal your information.
- Limit real-time info: Avoid posting detailed schedules or live updates.
- Monitor mentions: Set up alerts to track when your name or campaign is mentioned online.
- Store data securely: Use only new USB memory sticks purchased by your team and regularly back up important campaign information.

In-Person Security:

- Plan with awareness: Think ahead about where you're going, how visible you'll be, and who you may encounter.
- Prepare for disruption: Practice calm responses to verbal abuse or negative interactions.
- Large public events: Plans should reflect the type of event, expected attendance, location, and overall context. Consider the following measures, as appropriate:
 - Coordinate with venue staff on security planning
 - Use pre-registration or a check-in table
 - Conduct bag or coat checks as needed

- Watch for suspicious vehicles or individuals
- Identify all exits and have a clear path out
- Keep some space between candidates/speakers and the crowd

Evacuation and Emergency Procedures for Candidates or Support Team Members with Disabilities

Security plans must account for a candidate's and/or their support team's disabilities, including specific mobility, sensory, or cognitive disabilities in an emergency (e.g., fire, direct threat, medical crisis). This includes:

- Ensuring quick and safe evacuation from all campaign sites and events.
- With consent, training support team members to assist the candidate/team member during an emergency without causing injury or panic, including but not limited to working with the person and their mobility device, service animal, interpreter, support person, evacuation equipment, and/or assistive technology.

Foreign Interference

Foreign states sometimes carry out covert activities to advance their interests in Canada. This is known as foreign interference and it is a growing threat to our democracy.

As a candidate, you play a vital role in protecting democratic processes.

Foreign interference can be subtle but harmful. It may come from abroad or be carried out through local proxies. Common tactics include:

- **Elicitation & Cultivation:** Attempts to build relationships or gather sensitive information for later use.
- **Coercion & Intimidation:** Pressure or threats aimed at influencing decisions or discouraging participation.
- **Illicit Financing:** Undeclared or illegal funds used to gain political influence.
- **Cyber Attacks:** Targeting campaigns or data systems to disrupt or steal information.
- **Disinformation:** Spreading false or misleading content to manipulate opinions or create division.

To learn more, please consult the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) guide entitled “[Foreign Interference and You](#).”



To report suspicious incidents of a criminal nature, which may be of concern to national security, contact the RCMP's [National Security Information Network](#) at 1-800-420-5805, or by completing the [National Security Information Network webform](#).

To report non-immediate threat information related to national security, contact CSIS at 613-993-9620, or 1-800-267-7685, or by completing the [web form](#).

Mental and Emotional Health

Being the target of harassment or intimidation can have a psychological impact on candidates and those close to them. Please consult the Public Health sites for Ottawa ([Mental Health Resources](#)) or Gatineau ([Santé Mentale](#)) for information on crisis services (amongst other mental health support information and resources). Please take care of your emotional well-being throughout the campaign. If you are struggling or just need someone to talk to, support is available – you're not alone.

Useful Links

- Government of Canada
[Political candidates: Responding to threats](#)
- Sûreté du Québec
[Relations avec les municipalités](#)
- Government of Canada
[“Get Cyber Safe”](#)
- CANEmerg
[Personal Mental Health and Wellness Toolkit](#)
- Canadian Centre for Cyber Security
[Cyber Security Guide for Campaign Teams](#)
and [Cyber Security Advice for Political Candidates](#)

