



# EXERCISE YOUR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

Election Day will be here before you know it. And while casting your ballot is an undeniably important part of your democratic rights, so are a host of other political activities that ensure your voice is heard. As a public service employee, you may be under the impression that you are barred from engaging in the political process, but this simply isn't true.

Your right to freedom of thought, belief and expression is protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. What your position demands, however, is some degree of caution when exercising these rights.

## Practical considerations

When assessing whether to participate in a political activity, use a common-sense approach. Consider the nature of the political activity, the nature of your duties and your visibility, both in terms of your position and your personal life. In our view, the situations where a member's ability to engage in political activity might be reasonably restricted are relatively rare. These should be restricted to the few cases where a member is obviously responsible for supervisory/managerial duties or has high-level decision-making authority, but only when their profile and the particular political activity is sufficiently visible that legitimate concerns of impartiality could be raised.

If you have questions about participation in a political activity or you feel your political rights have been restricted by your employer, please contact your CAPE representative or labour relations officer immediately. We're here to help! For more information, go to: [bit.ly/cape\\_poli](https://bit.ly/cape_poli)

**In light of your rights and the aforementioned practical considerations, we consider the following activities to be low-risk:**

- Signing a candidate's nomination papers
- Wearing a party or candidate button outside of work
- Displaying a lawn sign
- Working as a canvasser for a political party or candidate
- Working in a campaign office
- Soliciting funds for a campaign or party
- Attending rallies and demonstrations on political topics
- Attending political conventions
- Taking part in election-day activities on behalf of a party or candidate

**However, while engaging in political activity, please ensure that:**

- You do so only during non-working hours
- You remove any name tag or identification card that might identify you as a public service employee
- You do not identify yourself as a federal public servant

## Social Media

With social media, sharing your thoughts and positions to a wide-reaching audience has never been easier. If you choose to use your social media platforms for political purposes, we ask you to follow these common sense tips:

- Don't use the employer's network or devices
- Don't engage in online political activity during working hours
- Don't identify yourself as a public servant when communicating online about political issues, parties and politicians through your social media platforms
- Avoid comments on social media that target individuals or specific government departments or agencies, particularly if it's your own department or agency.
- Tighten-up your Facebook privacy filters, but be aware that your privacy settings will not make you immune from employer scrutiny
- If re-posting or re-tweeting links to posts of a political nature, doing so without adding personal commentary is less likely to attract employer scrutiny
- Comments on news articles increasingly link to your Facebook profile, which may display where you work. Be careful!