

Protest 101

This guide explains your rights so you can feel more confident attending events here in Stone Mills or throughout our region in Eastern Ontario along both the Northern and Southern Routes.

Confusion regarding the possible stigma or ramifications of public demonstrations and protest is very normal and understandable for people who would not normally be thinking about public demonstrations, rallies or protests. You are NOT alone with some of your worries and questions.

The messaging at most of these events will be clear "NO ALTO" and therefore they will be essential places where we can come together to share our common messaging and also create awareness!

Know Your Rights: Peaceful Protest in Canada

In Canada, the right to speak out and gather with others is protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Under **Section 2 of the Charter**, Canadians have fundamental freedoms that include:

- **Freedom of expression** – the right to share opinions and ideas publicly
- Freedom of peaceful assembly – the right to gather with others to demonstrate or protest

These rights exist so people can raise concerns, challenge decisions, and participate in public life. Peaceful protest has long been a normal and important part of democracy.

When people can protest

Peaceful protests in Canada can happen on any day of the week — including Sundays and holidays. The law generally doesn't limit demonstrations to specific days. What matters more is that the protest is peaceful and follows local rules about safety, noise, traffic, and access.

Where people can protest

Peaceful protests commonly take place in public spaces such as:

- Streets and sidewalks
- Public parks and squares
- Near legislatures, city halls, or other government buildings
- Other public areas where people normally gather

These places are traditionally recognized as spaces where people can express views and be heard.

Important limits to know

Like all rights in Canada, these freedoms come with reasonable limits. For example:

- Protests must remain **peaceful**. Violence, threats, or riots are not protected.
- Protests generally **cannot take place on private property** without permission.
- Demonstrations cannot **seriously block emergency services or essential access**.
- Certain locations may have **local restrictions**, such as safety zones around hospitals, schools, or courts.

Governments can place limits when they can justify them as necessary for public safety, order, or protecting the rights of others.

The key takeaway

Canadians **do have the right to gather, speak out, and protest peacefully**. Knowing these rights — and the boundaries around them — helps people participate confidently and responsibly in public life.