

A Guide for Businesses, Venues, & Staff: Recognizing & Responding to Extremist Activity



● The role of local businesses

In the last few years, extremist groups have paraded their hateful ideology online and in public, trying to normalize their ideas in mainstream society and everyday life. This guide is designed for dealing with extremism at work - whether that's employees, business owners, restaurateurs, hoteliers, venue operators, or customer service staff such as waiters or bartenders- to help them deal with situations in which violent extremists speak out or plan to conduct activities inside places of business.

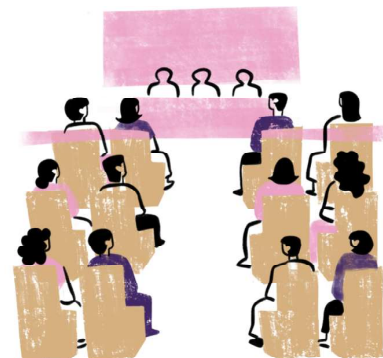
● What should you do if you have an event space?

Violent extremist groups frequently use restaurants, bars, small and mid-size venues, and hotel event spaces for recruitment events and regular group meetups. Often, the hotel, restaurant, and bar owners do not know who they are hosting or what kind of group meetup they are facilitating. Keep in mind that extremist groups will often rent facilities under a false pretense, such as a reunion, comedy show, wedding, birthday, or a concert series. It is not unusual for organizers of music acts for right-wing bands to target youth for recruitment during the event.

Don't let yourself be fooled. With a clear "No" to renting your space to extremist and hate groups, you can avoid being an unwitting accomplice to their activities and avoid having your reputation impacted. Even the appearance that your business is affiliated with hate groups and extremism is terrible publicity - failure to take a stand can appear like support for these groups and their hateful ideas. Distancing yourself from these sorts of group get-togethers will also limit the chances of violent radicals frustrating or annoying your other customers.

● When making a reservation, you can do the following

- ① Ask exactly what the purpose or nature of the event is, and keep this in the contract of use as stipulated. Are the rooms being used for cultural purposes, political purposes, professional/commercial purposes, and/or private purposes? By establishing the nature of the event ahead of time, and getting it in a written contract, you can hold them to the contract as agreed upon or cancel if the event was misrepresented.
- ② Ask for the name and background information about any speakers, artists, and/or music groups performing in your space. Look up their names online (and in the links at the end of this resource), and be on the lookout for signs, symbols, or affiliations with neo-nazi, white supremacist, and other extremist ideologies.
- ③ Take note of questions and special wishes from prospective customers. If there are requests such as "does your staff speak English?" or asking about employee demographics, or the display of nationalist banners, caution should be exercised. Ask to see any banners before the event. If in doubt, compare the symbols used at the potential event with symbols on the internet. You will find a list of links at the end of the resource for reference.



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- ① Change your Terms and Conditions in your contract to reflect limitations of use.
- ② Always have a written rental agreement in which you refer to the use of space for the individual event:
 - Ensure that the space cannot be subleased to other organizations.
 - Ensure that individual names are linked to each rental contract.
 - Include in your rental agreement that the event will not feature any racist, xenophobic, anti-Indigenous, Islamophobic, antisemitic, anti-Arab, violent extremist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, or anti-democratic content.
- ③ Specify that the event:
 - May not attack the human dignity and rights of other people.
 - May not feature symbols which are anti-democratic.
 - May not be discriminatory based on race, ethnicity, sex, gender, or religion.
 - Specify that any violations will lead to the immediate termination of the contract.
- ④ Specify that no illegal activities can be planned in your space.
- ⑤ Your staff reserves the right to enter the space to verify adherence to the contract.

● What can you include in your contract if you are a small business or venue operator?

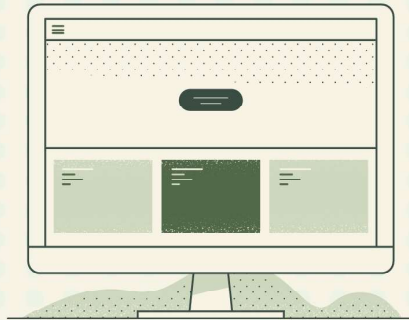
In addition to the contract specifics included in the example linked above, as well as details in accordance with local laws, you can add in this general requirement to your contracts with customers:

" General Terms and Conditions.

In particular, events in our space require consideration for our guests and employees of diverse backgrounds, as well as our own ideological commitment. As such, any assembly and use that includes violent extremist ideas, or glorifies violence and discriminatory attitudes to the outside world are undesirable. The tenant recognizes this request, and their obligation to ensure that the use of the rooms does not welcome violent extremist groups or ideology."

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If you witness or experience racism or hate,
don't stay silent. Visit WeSupportHamilton.ca
to report your experience and connect with
community support.



Resource links

- Global Project Against Hate and Extremism, Extremist Symbols Database:
<https://globalextrémism.org/global-extremist-symbols-database/>
- WeSupportHamilton.ca

This guide was developed with permission from the PERIL Institute and has been adapted by the Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre (HARRC) and the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion (HCCI) to reflect the Canadian context.

Acknowledgements



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