



Chamber of Commerce
Brantford • Brant

Chamber Statement in Support of Businesses Experiencing Protests

The Chamber of Commerce Brantford-Brant, through its membership, has received a number of questions and concerns regarding incidents of clients and customers choosing to ignore public health guidelines and mask/face covering mandates, and confusion over responsibility for enforcement.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms is legislation directed towards the “state” and includes persons in authority and our courts. Further to this, an individual’s rights are not absolute. Individual rights are always weighed and balanced against what is best for all in our society. Any person can launch a human rights complaint and/or initiate civil proceedings against a person/business/institution however, a business cannot violate a person’s rights under this legislation.

Everyone has the lawful right to peacefully protest. However, there is a significant difference between conducting a peaceful protest or demonstration and the targeted harassment of individuals within their place of employment and livelihood.

The safety of our community as a whole is paramount and, as we are currently in the midst of a global pandemic, proper consideration must also be given regarding gathering limitations, social distancing, and other regulations under the Provincial Reopening Ontario Act and Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.

Any business can assert [**Ontario's Trespass to Property Act**](#), to disallow entry of any person who refuses to wear a non-medical mask – notice should initially be given to the person. Also, business owners have a right at common law to exclude entry to any person who fails to lawfully comply with a health directive or order.

Articulation for refusing entry should include that this directive is being followed due to applicable laws already noted above and for the health and safety of employees and other members of the public (customers).

The Chamber seeks to support all businesses in our community to operate safely for their employees and customers and encourages businesses to follow guidelines noted above. The Chamber supports the efforts of the Brantford Police Service in their duty to ensure the safety and well-being of the public; which includes businesses and their employees; including continuing to actively monitor public protest areas for the safety of all parties. Please continue to report issues through the Brantford Police Service to ensure they are followed up by provincial health authorities and police members.

The Chamber of Commerce Brantford-Brant and the Brantford Police Service understand and can appreciate the frustration businesses owners are feeling as we continue to navigate the ever-changing challenges of this pandemic. Please continue your best efforts to operate safely and lawfully, and reach out for support when needed.