

Political Activity Self-Assessment Tool

Q&A / Tool Orientation

Overview

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What's its purpose?

- The [Toronto Public Service By-law](#) applies to all City of Toronto employees and [applicable Agency employees](#).
- The TPS By-law's [Political Activity Provisions](#) reaffirms the rights and responsibilities of the Toronto Public Service to participate in political activities, while still advancing Toronto's public service as professional, impartial and ethical in practice and public perception.
- The TPS By-law's Political Activity Provisions are applicable to all employees covered under the TPS By-law for federal, provincial, municipal or school board elections.
- The Political Activity Self-Assessment Tool is a new permanent online resource that uses a short set of questions to provide advice and considerations for staff on how members of the public service should balance their decision to engage in political activity with their duty to maintain political neutrality and impartiality.

How does it work?

- The Political Activity Self-Assessment Tool is an online resource that uses a short set of questions to provide advice and considerations for staff.
- Tool focuses on four primary areas of concern for Toronto Public Service Members:
 - i. Role responsibilities – Direct or perceived ability to influence significant City choices**
(e.g. Council decisions, hiring decisions, regulatory enforcement, awarding of contracts, grants or contributions, staff supervision)
 - ii. Role Responsibilities – Direct or perceived ability to influence relationship with the public**
(e.g. provide direct service to residents or businesses; regularly interact with the public as City community engagement facilitator / public consultation organizer / stakeholder representative, regularly interact with the media as an identifiable City representative)
 - iii. Intended Action – Engaging in high-profile, publicly visible political activities?**
 - iv. Intended Action – Engaging in low-profile, less publicly visible political activities?**

How does it work?

- The Self-Assessment Tool assesses the visibility of your position within the Toronto Public Service in combination with the visibility of the political activity that is being considered.
- Based on the answers, the Tool will determine whether specific characteristics within the current Toronto Public Service role and responsibilities may warrant caution when engaging in a political activity during an election. The Tool will identify any considerations or precautions that may be warranted before the user decides to proceed with a political activity.
- The Tool **does not** collect or store any data.
- Each page displays the message "This is a preview, NO results will be recorded." In this "Preview Mode" all input from users is automatically deleted.

Self-Assessment Tool Advice Result Options

- The following slides capture the 5 potential options for advice results the Political Activity Self-Assessment Tool may generate based on the user's input:
 - a) Result:** Reconsider your participation in this political activity. If you still decide to proceed with this activity, seek advice.
 - b) Result:** Consider exercising caution & seek advice
 - c) Result:** Consider exercising caution regarding the location of the political activity
 - d) Result:** No issues identified with proceeding. A few things to consider...
 - e) Result:** Based on your responses in this self-assessment, you may...
- Users will receive only one of the possible five different advice result options based on their input into the Tool. No user data is retained by the Tool after each use.

Self-Assessment Tool Advice Result Options

Result: Reconsider your participation in this political activity. If you still decide to proceed with this activity, seek advice.

Based on your responses in this self-assessment, it is strongly suggested that you reconsider your participation in this particular political activity for the following reasons:

- Your public service duties include having an influence on City policy development and its decision-making processes, or you are required to regularly interact with members of the public. This means that, in general, you should exercise greater caution in participating in political activity that may be perceived as partisan during election periods, especially if this activity is highly visible to the public; and
- The activity that you identified is high profile and would make you broadly visible to the public. This means it has the potential to impact public perception of your ability to perform your duties in a politically neutral manner.

If you still decide to proceed with this activity, please seek advice from your Supervisor, Manager or [Ethics Executive](#).

Self-Assessment Tool Advice Result Options

Result: Consider exercising caution & seek advice

Based on your responses in this self-assessment, you meet one or more of the conditions listed below. Consider exercising caution and seek advice from your Supervisor, Manager, or [Ethics Executive](#) prior to proceeding with this activity, should you decide to participate.

- Your public service duties have policy/financial influence or require you to interact with the public. This means that in general, you should exercise greater caution in participating in political activities that may be perceived as partisan during election periods, especially if the activity has a higher visibility to the public.*
- The political activity that you identified is high profile and would make you broadly visible to the public. The activity has the potential to impact public perception of your ability to perform your duties in a politically neutral manner.

*If your public service duties require that you interact with the public, you should consider exercising greater caution in participating in this particular political activity, especially if the activity will take place in the same neighbourhood or district as your work location.

Should you choose to proceed with this activity, consider seeking advice from your Supervisor, Manager or [Ethics Executive](#).

Self-Assessment Tool Advice Result Options

Result: Consider exercising caution regarding the location of the political activity

Based on your responses in this self-assessment, it is suggested that you consider exercising caution, particularly regarding the location of the political activity, should you choose to proceed.

It is suggested that you consider exercising greater caution when participating in this particular political activity, especially if the activity will take place in the same neighbourhood or district as your work location.

Performing the same activity in another part of Toronto or the surrounding Greater Toronto Area region is generally considered to be a lower risk activity.

If you are unsure about how to proceed or have questions, consider seeking advice from your Supervisor, Manager or [Ethics Executive](#).

Self-Assessment Tool Advice Result Options

Result: No issues identified with proceeding. A few things to consider...

Based on your responses in this self-assessment, there are no issues identified if you decide to proceed with the political activity that you are considering. If you do proceed, there are some things that you may want to think about:

- Does your public service duties require that you ever interact with the public?
- Will the political activity that you are thinking about participating in occur in the same neighbourhood or district as your work location?

Engaging in political activity in the same geographic location as your work location may increase the visibility of the activity and contribute to questions of public perception of Toronto Public Service members even if the participation is within the TPS By-law's Political Activities Provisions for staff. Taking part in the same political activity in another part of Toronto or the Greater Toronto Area region may be less prominent to members of the public and worth considering if this situation applies to you, given your public service role and responsibilities.

If you are unsure about how to proceed or have questions, consider seeking advice from your Supervisor, Manager or [Ethics Executive](#).

Self-Assessment Tool Advice Result Options

Result: Based on your responses in this self-assessment, you may...

- Intend to engage in political activities not identified by this Self-Assessment Tool;
- Require additional clarification about your intended political activities; or
- Not intend to engage in political activities.

Additional considerations may be required to recommend a course of action if your intended political activity is not identified by the Self-Assessment Tool or more information is needed about the political activity in which you are considering participating. It is suggested that you consult your Supervisor, Manager or [Ethics Executive](#) for advice on how best to proceed.

If you do not intend to engage in political activities, this does not apply to you. Please remain mindful of the [Toronto Public Service By-law's](#) Political Activity Provisions requirements for City and applicable Agency staff during election periods. If you are unsure or have any questions at any time, consider seeking advice from your Supervisor, Manager or [Ethics Executive](#).

Political Activity Self-Assessment Tool

Questions?

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