

Shoebox Memorial Display - Guide & Rules of Use

The purpose of this campaign is to draw attention to the humanity of pre-born victims who die alongside their mothers as a result of a violent crime. By sharing their stories through this display, we hope to touch the hearts and minds of Canadians and make them recognize the need for justice for these wrongful deaths.

All usage of the display should conform to the following rules and procedures:

General

1. The display is a public image of the pro-life movement. All activity associated with this display must exemplify both grace and truth. The display is most effective when used to initiate conversations. If possible, encourage volunteers to reach out by approaching the public to ask if they have seen the display, what they think about it, and to offer additional information about the Pre-Born Victims of Crime initiative.
2. Whoever wishes to use the display must contact We Need a Law at info@weneedalaw.ca or by phone 1-866-410-9625. Please include your name, location, phone number, and length of time you need it.
3. Because the display is associated with We Need a Law, ensure you have permission from us before using the display in any way beyond what is set out here. For example, refrain from adding signs that promote a different political issue or showing graphic images of abortion.
4. If other groups wish to make use of the display after you, please have them contact We Need a Law so that all scheduling goes through one office, to avoid having the display double-booked.
5. **Whoever is using the display is expected to assist with transporting it to the next location. This could involve shipping costs or finding someone to drive it to the city where the next group wants to use it.**

Planning a Display

6. Find a suitable location that can display 40 shoeboxes spread out with 2 feet between each box. It should be at least 300 square feet and have good exposure to pedestrians.
7. If the display is on public land, you will most likely need a permit for the flag display. Please consult the bylaws of the relevant authority (e.g. City Hall) to find out what process you need to follow. If you speak with city staff about this, be sure to explain that it is temporary, there are no fixed signs, and all efforts will be made to keep the public safe. If you are told that your request is not permitted, ask to see the relevant bylaw which forbids or restricts it. If they can't produce such a bylaw, or if it doesn't clearly speak to this situation, respectfully remind them that all Canadians have constitutionally-protected freedom of expression. Our staff that can assist you if you are denied a permit for the display. Please contact us at info@weneedalaw.ca and we will ensure you get the help you need.
8. If a permit is required, get the permit in advance and have it on hand on the day of the event.
9. Some towns may require event insurance that you would need to coordinate and cover (approx. \$250/display).
10. Advertise the plans for a display to the local pro-life community via newsletters, church bulletins, and word of mouth.
11. Ensure that you get a committed group of volunteers to RSVP for the set-up. We recommend around 5 volunteers to set up the display (it will take approximately 30 minutes to set up).
12. The impact of this display can go beyond those who are there to see it. Take pictures and be sure to share with media and your pro-life community.
13. If you would like to engage the local media (we recommend it!), make use of the sample press release below and be sure to contact the media before the display is set up. Don't expect them to report on it unless you bring it to their attention. A phone call helps a lot. A press release can allow for comment from local organizers. We encourage you to direct phone/TV interview requests to We Need a Law. Our legal counsel, Tabitha Ewert, is often available to speak with media, either in person or over the phone.
14. Be sure to have someone taking pictures and preparing a short write-up or letter to the editor which can be sent to the local media.

Event Day: Setting Up and Hosting

1. Ensure that all volunteers are aware of, and following, the general rules (above).

2. Build the boxes and set them on the ground, leaving enough room for the public to walk between the boxes.
3. Set up the 12 lawn signs along the sidewalk and around the display. They should be spaced about 10 ft apart.
4. Info tracts: We included infographics with the display. The purpose is to have volunteers hand these out to pedestrians who are interested in learning more. If there are fewer than about 500 remaining, please contact us at info@weneedalaw.ca.
5. Clipboard & Petitions – gather signatures throughout the day in support of a Pre-born Victims of Crime law. Contact us at info@weneedalaw.ca to organize the transfer of signed petitions to the We Need a Law office.
6. Safety: Don't do anything that could be a hazard or distraction to drivers. Keep children far away from roads. If possible, have people available with video cameras. Try to capture any vandalism, etc. on camera.
7. Communications: take pictures, share on social media, send the press release to local media, make a write-up for your bulletins and newsletters, etc.

Clean Up/Follow-up

1. Ensure that the boxes are folded up and flattened, the lawn signs disassembled, and the petitions and infographics are neatly returned, packaged in the same condition or better.
2. If anything is damaged and can't be fixed locally, let us know so that we can have it replaced.
3. Let us know how it went! We are happy to share pictures, stories, and media coverage with our supporters. We especially welcome stories and experiences that show the impact it made.

Sample Press Notice/Release: Shoebox memorial honours pre-born victims of crime

Small shoeboxes will be spread among signs in Tree Hill Park on Saturday, September 27 to remember pre-born children who died with their mothers as a result of violent crime. These small victims go unrecognized by our legal system because they were not yet born when they died. But their loved ones mourn the loss of two lives.

"Pregnant women are at an increased risk of domestic violence. This also puts their pre-born children in danger," said Trish Van Vanderson, the event organizer. "Abortion politics and the fear of recognizing the humanity of children in the womb has prevented our courts from being able to deliver justice in these cases. If a pregnant woman is assaulted or murdered and her pre-born child dies, that child is not counted as a victim."

There are more than 70 cases in recent Canadian history where these children were not counted, although the harm they suffered as victims was very real. In 2017, Arianna Goberdhan was 9 months pregnant when her husband stabbed her to death. Her pre-born daughter, Asaara, died in the womb while waiting for emergency services to arrive. She was not counted as a victim. In 2014, Cassandra Kaake was 7 months pregnant when she was killed along with her pre-born daughter whom she had named Molly. Molly was not counted as a victim.

"We are setting up this display to draw attention to a gap in Canadian law," said VanVanderson. "These children deserve to be named and counted as victims, and their killers should be charged and sentenced accordingly."

The display points people to ThereWereTwo.ca for additional information about the issue of pre-born victims of crime.

Interviews can be arranged by emailing info@weneedalaw.ca or calling 1-866-410-9625.

Sample Letter to the Editor: Two victims – both should get justice

In the recent display at [insert location] we drew attention to the sad reality that when a pregnant woman is murdered, there is no consideration of her pre-born child. The murderer in these cases is usually an intimate partner, who would no doubt be aware that his wife or girlfriend was pregnant, and obviously knows that killing her would also end the life of the child in her womb. But our law fails to recognize both victims of that crime. This is why we put out small shoeboxes, to recognize the forgotten victims and highlight stories of Canadian women killed while pregnant. In each of these cases a second human being was killed, and our law has no way to recognize that and deliver real justice. Canada has no abortion law, and those who support this status quo fear any acknowledgement of humanity in the womb. Pre-born children remain ignored and victimized by whomever might decide they are unwanted. I hope this wakes some of our community up to something that is wrong with how our country selectively decides which lives to value and when.