

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION INFORMATIONAL GUIDE

FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

Special considerations

- Consider what has happened to the victim, not what the victim has done wrong.
- People experiencing trauma have a wide range of coping mechanisms including, but not limited to, hostility, violence, and shutting down. They may not be compliant.
- Building trust and rapport are key to helping the person. Slow down and be patient. Whenever possible explain what is happening, even why you can't share some things.
- Bring an advocate whenever possible.
- Investigations of human trafficking involving a minor require a coordinated effort with child protection services, state and federal labor departments, and civil legal services.
- Be aware of any culturally specific behaviors, items, or wishes that need to be respected and accommodate them as much as you can.
- In labor trafficking situations, the person may have entered into employment willingly at first, but work and living conditions may rise to level of trafficking later.
- Labor trafficking and sex trafficking can occur at the same time, or one of the crimes may intersect with another crime, like domestic violence or sexual assault.

What to look and listen for

Who are they with?

- Controlling or abusive "Daddy"/"Boyfriend"/"Wifey" or an older male or female.
- Someone else is carrying the victim's identification and personal items.
- Person with them is considered an employer, supervisor, or crew leader.
- Other minors present who seem controlled or manipulated.
- The victim cannot identify the person they are with.
- In a group providing services and/or someone is controlling them or their money.
- They live with the person they are working for.

What are they telling you or not telling you?

- Able to have a conversation without looking nervous.
- Answers seem coached, rehearsed, or look to someone else before answering.
- Talk excessively about travelling or moving around.
- Avoid answering where they are living and/or working.
- Claim, without prompting, that no one is forcing them to do this.
- Telling inconsistent stories.
- Talk about owing money to the person they work for.
- Afraid of the person they work for.
- Fearing something bad may happen if they leave their current job.
- Working and not receiving all of their pay.

What do they have?

- Carrying a lot of cash or prepaid credit cards.
- Have sexual items like condoms, lube, lingerie, or sex toys.
- Carrying multiple cell phones.
- Have self-defense weapons such as tasers or pepper spray.
- Expired driver's license.
- Do not have control of their own documents or documents are invalid.

Next steps

- **Start a conversation.**
 - Separate all people first.
 - Make sure the victim(s) are ok: food, water, a blanket, medical attention, and in a place where they feel safe. Call a third party interpreter if necessary.
 - Keep victim information confidential, unless given permission to share.
 - Give the victim(s) an opportunity to contact a safe guardian or caregiver, as long as the contact is not the trafficker or assisting the trafficker.
- If they seem unwilling to talk, give them your contact information because they may be ready to talk later.
- **Consult with a trauma-informed investigator for assistance and guidance.**
- **Contact Child Protection Services if the victim is a minor.**
- **Ensure the person is aware of victim resources and programs that are available.**
- **Ask if there are other potential victims.**
- **Record evidence**
 - Phones: match to owner and obtain password. Check number for matching sex ads, ask for consent to view photos, calls, and messages.
 - Computers: match to owner and obtain passwords. Look for social media accounts like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and dating apps.
 - Confiscate evidence related to labor or sex trafficking: phones, money, credit cards, and sexual items. Try to return phones as soon as possible.
 - Collect separate statements from each person interviewed.
 - Collect employment-related documents from victim(s) and from employer/contractor, including copies of any work contract, pay statements, pictures of working and living conditions, electronic messages exchanged with the employer/contractor, and any other work-related documents victim may have.
 - Take pictures of the subjects and victims, evidence, and area.
 - Write notes on each encounter (attitude, description, information divulged).

Resources

- Minnesota Human Trafficking Investigators Task Force (MNHITF) - 651-793-7000
- [Regional Safe Harbor Navigator \(www.health.state.mn.us/communities/safeharbor/response/navigators.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/safeharbor/response/navigators.html)
- Minnesota Day One Crisis Hotline - 866-223-1111



Minnesota Department of Health -- Safe Harbor
 85 East 7th Place
 PO Box 64882
 St. Paul, MN 55164-0882
 651-201-5000
health.safeharbor@state.mn.us
www.health.state.mn.us
 To obtain this information in a different format,
 call: 651-201-5484.

Adapted from the Minnesota Human Trafficking Investigators Task Force (MNHITF) pocket card. You may obtain this information as a pocket card through the MNHITF.

This guide was produced by the Minnesota Department of Health under 2016-MU-MU-K153, awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions or recommendations expressed in this guide are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the office position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.