BLUE CAMPAIGN

One Voice. One Mission. End Human Trafficking.®

HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESPONSE GUIDE

for the Hospitality Industry

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

As a hospitality industry professional, you are in a unique position to recognize and report potential human trafficking violations. You play an important role because you regularly interact with guests and the greater public in general. You may have employees, coworkers, or subcontractors who are victims of forced labor. Hotels and motels are also major locations where traffickers force sex trafficking victims to provide commercial sex to paying customers. Victims may be forced to stay at a hotel or motel where customers come to them, or they are required to go to rooms rented out by the customers. Traffickers may also use hotels when transporting victims to new locations.

You may be able to recognize signs that a guest is in danger. This guide seeks to inform hospitality industry professionals about human trafficking and its indicators so you can be better prepared to recognize a potential victim at your place of business and know how to report a potential case.

This guide includes information about:

- What human trafficking is.
- How to recognize it among guests.
- Key indicators for four groups of employees.
- Examples of human trafficking in the hospitality industry.
- Reporting options if you suspect a guest is affected by human trafficking or is being exploited.

While hotels and motels can be especially attractive locations for all forms of human trafficking, **it is also important to note** that human trafficking occurs at sporting events, theme parks, on cruise ships, and in many other areas of the tourism industry.

For the purposes of this guide, the term "victim" will be used to describe an individual experiencing human trafficking. The term "survivor" will be used to describe a former victim who is in the process of recovery.

WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Human trafficking involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act. Human traffickers use various forms of force, fraud, and coercion to control and exploit victims.[1] These forms may include, but are not limited to, fraudulent employment opportunities, false promises of love or a better life, psychological coercion (i.e., threats of blackmail), and violence or threats of violence.[2] However, under U.S. law, causing someone under the age of 18 to engage in a commercial sex act, regardless of using force, fraud, or coercion is human trafficking.[3]

The crime of human trafficking hinges on the exploitation of another person. People often falsely believe "human trafficking" implies that victims must be moved from one place to another to qualify as a victim. Human trafficking does not require a border crossing or transportation to be considered a crime.[4] It is a crime that can be committed against an individual who has never left their hometown.

1 To learn more about the definitions of force, fraud, and coercion and examples of different indicators of human trafficking, please see pg. 14-16 of the U.S Council's 2021 Annual Report: https://www.state.gov/united-states-advisory-council-on-human-trafficking-annual-report-2021/#_Toc89431164

2 See 18 USC Chapter 77 for language on elements of the crime.

3 See 18 USC Chapter 77 for precise definitions.

4 Learn more about the difference between human trafficking and human smuggling: dhs.gov/bluecampaign

Who It May Affect

Human trafficking victims can be any age, race, gender identity, sex, ethnicity, nationality, immigration status, or socioeconomic class. In many cases, victims do not come forward to seek help because of varying vulnerability factors that may include potential language barriers, a fear and distrust of authority, or they do not self-identify as a victim. Traffickers target vulnerabilities and will look to satisfy whatever need an individual has, whether it's providing basic needs like food or shelter or emotional support.

HOW TRAFFICKERS OPERATE

Traffickers often take advantage of the privacy and anonymity offered by the hospitality industry. They can operate discreetly because staff and guests may not know the signs of human trafficking. Traffickers often prey on victims with little or no social safety net, including a lack of social or family support systems, unstable housing, previous traumatic experiences or abuse, questionable immigration status, limited English proficiency, or an inability to decipher exploitative situations. There is no single face of traffickers. They can be any gender or from any background.

INDICATORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING FOR GENERAL HOTEL AND MOTEL STAFF

Hotel and motel employees are often in the best position to see potential signs of human trafficking, especially when your duties give you access to different areas of the properties. You may also have direct or indirect contact with both traffickers and victims. While no single indicator is necessarily proof of human trafficking, recognizing the signs is the first step in identifying possible victims.

Does the guest…

- Appear to be deprived of food, water, sleep, basic hygiene, medical care, or other necessities?
- Act fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, nervous/paranoid, or disassociated/ "checked out"?
- Have bruises or other signs of physical trauma?
- Have tattoos or scars that would indicate branding by a trafficker?
- Have scars, cut marks, burns, or other signs of self-harm/suicidal tendencies?
- Defer to another person to speak for them?
- Appear to be coached on what to say, or their responses seem rehearsed?
- Have a difficult time providing logical answers to basic questions?
- Appear to be traveling with few or no personal items, such as luggage or other bags?
- Exhibit evidence of verbal threats, emotional abuse, or being treated in a demeaning way?
- Seem to be with a "boyfriend," "girlfriend," or romantic partner who is noticeably older?
- Appear to be with a group of girls traveling with an older male or female?
- Dress inappropriately for their age, or in out-of-season clothing?
- Appear to have no control over their money and/or ID?
- Reference someone in their group being their "sugar daddy/sugar momma," or refer to themselves as a "sugar baby"?
- Reference traveling to other cities or towns frequently?
- Talk about getting paid very little or not at all for the work they do?
- Appear to not have freedom of movement?

To test your knowledge of these signs, take Blue Campaign's General Public Indicators Challenge, which includes an example of human trafficking in a hotel setting.

What to Do If You Suspect Human Trafficking

Do not attempt to confront a suspected trafficker or alert a victim to your suspicions. Follow your organization's reporting protocol or call 911 or local authorities if someone is in immediate danger.

You can report suspected human trafficking to: **Homeland Security Investigations Tip Line (HSI)** at **1-866-347-2423** or submit an HSI tip form online.

To get victim support, contact the **National Human Trafficking Hotline** at **1-888-373-7888.**

INDICATORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING FOR HOUSEKEEPING, MAINTENANCE, AND ROOM SERVICE STAFF

Housekeeping, maintenance, and room service staff typically have the most access to guest rooms where signs of human trafficking may be apparent. By being conscious of human trafficking indicators, you can help identify possible trafficking activities and victims.

Does the guest…

- Use the "Do Not Disturb" sign constantly?
- Request additional towels, new linens, etc. multiple times a day but deny hotel/motel staff entry into the room?
- Refuse cleaning services for multiple days?
- Keep excessive amounts of cash in the room?
- Possess multiple computers, cell phones, credit card readers, or other technology?
- Reserve multiple rooms?
- Leave the room infrequently, not at all, or at odd hours?
- Possess children's items or clothing without having a child registered with the room?
- Loiter in the hallways and appear to monitor the area?
- Keep excessive amounts of alcohol or illegal drugs in their room?
- Possess evidence of pornography or sex paraphernalia (condoms, lubricant, lotion, etc.)?
- Leave minors alone in their room for long periods of time?
- Have an excessive number of people staying in their room?
- Stay for an extended period of time with few or no personal possessions?
- Allow a constant flow of people into a room at all hours?
- Keep their room stocked with merchandise, luggage, mail packages, and purses/wallets with different names?
- Loiter in the parking lot, lobby, or hallways and return to the room after a visitor leaves?

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INDICATORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING FOR CONCIERGE, BELLHOP, FRONT DESK, SECURITY, AND VALET STAFF

Concierge, bellhop, front desk, security, and valet staff are typically the first to see guests when they enter the hotel. When checking in or requesting hotel amenities, a guest may exhibit behavior indicating human trafficking.

Does the guest…

- Appear distressed, disoriented, or have visible injuries?
- Not know the hotel name or area where they are?
- Reserve multiple rooms?
- Pay for their room with cash or pre-loaded credit card?
- Use hotel computers for adult-oriented or sexually explicit websites?
- Seem unforthcoming about their full name, home address, or vehicle information when registering?
- Appear to be a minor taking on adult roles or behaving older than their actual age (paying bills or requesting services)?
- Appear with a minor that he or she did not come with originally?
- Rent pornography when children are staying in the room?
- Have repeated visitors over a period of time, particularly those dropped off at the hotel?
- Leave room frequently, not at all, or at odd hours?
- Appear to be a minor with the patron late at night or during school hours (not on vacation)?
- Have no identification or use an ID that is not theirs?
- Rent the room by the hour, for less than a day, or for a long-term stay that does not appear normal?
- Request information or access to adult services or the sex industry?
- Rent a room with fewer beds than patrons?
- Sell items to or beg from other patrons or staff?
- Enter/exit through the side or rear entrances instead of the lobby or attempt to prop open exit doors?
- Park their car in the parking lot so that the license plate is not visible?

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INDICATORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING FOR FOOD AND BEVERAGE STAFF

Food and beverage staff may have access to a guest's room or see them using the hotel restaurant or bar. Be conscious of these signs indicating a guest may be a victim of human trafficking.

Does the guest…

- Entertain a minor at the bar or restaurant that he/she did not come in with originally?
- Claim to be adult although appearance suggests he/she is a minor?
- Loiter or solicit patrons or staff?
- Wait at a table or bar to be picked up by a patron?
- Ask staff or other patrons for food or money?
- Take cash or receipts left on tables?
- Attempt to recruit other victims?

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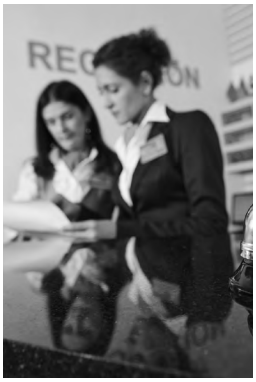
EXAMPLES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The following examples are fictional but based on actual tactics that traffickers use to exploit victims. These are indicators that someone is a potential victim of human trafficking. How you respond should be in accordance with your company's protocol.



Suspicious Check-In

Sydney is the front desk agent at a full-service hotel. One day, during a morning shift, a male patron approaches the check-in counter accompanied by a child who appears to be in her early teens. Sydney notices that the teenager looks tired and distressed. She also realizes that it is a weekday, and that this interaction is taking place during school hours. As the patron requests a room for a one-night stay, Sydney also notices that the teenager refuses to make eye contact. When Sydney asks the patron for identification, he becomes defensive. He asks, "Why would I need to show you my I.D. if I'm paying in cash?" Sydney explains that it is company policy. Annoyed, the patron leaves with the teenager at his side. Sydney senses that something is off about this encounter and calls her supervisor to discuss what to do next.

Red Flag Service Ticket

Marcus is answering a guest service order at the motel where he is a maintenance technician. Upon arrival to the room, an older female patron opens the door slightly but keeps the chain lock on. Through the crack in the door, Marcus can see a young adult male sitting on the edge of the single bed. Although the room is dimly lit, he can see the young man has bruises on his arm and neck and appears to be quietly crying. When he announces that he is there to fix the air conditioner, the patron becomes visibly irritated. "Why can't you fix it from the outside?" she asks. Marcus explains that it is an in-room unit. The patron tells him, "Never mind" and shuts the door. Marcus realizes that he has seen the patron in the hallway several times before, acting as if she is monitoring the area. He decides to report what he saw to his supervisor for additional action.

HOW TO REPORT HUMAN TRAFFICKING OR GET ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Do not at any time attempt to confront a suspected trafficker directly or alert a potential victim to your suspicions. Call 911 for emergency situations — threats of violence, physical assault, emergency medical needs, etc.

Please refer to your organization's protocol for reporting suspected instances of human trafficking and engage additional support resources. Also, consider contacting your state or local human trafficking task force for support. Call **1-866-347-2423** to report suspected human trafficking to the **Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Tip Line** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year.

Highly trained specialists take reports from both public and private agencies on more than 400 laws enforced by HSI, including those related to human trafficking. HSI agents and Victim Assistance Specialists responding to reports are specifically trained on a victim-centered approach to stabilize victims and connect them with support services, including providing immigration relief for qualifying victims.[5] You can also **submit an anonymous tip online via the HSI Tip Form** at: ice.gov/webform/hsi-tip-form.

Call 1-888-373-7888 or text HELP or INFO to BeFree (233733) to report suspected human trafficking to the National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH), which takes calls from victims and survivors of human trafficking and those who may know them. The NHTH can help connect victims with service providers in their area and assist in reporting their situation to trusted law enforcement contacts. The NHTH is a national, toll-free hotline available to answer calls from anywhere in the country, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in English, Spanish, and more than 200 other languages. The NHTH is not a law enforcement or immigration authority and is operated by a nongovernmental organization.

Call 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678) or go to CyberTipline.org to report suspected child sex trafficking, sextortion, online enticement, and sexual abuse material to the **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)**. NCMEC is a nonprofit organization, available 24/7 to work with families, victims, private industry, law enforcement, and the public to support the identification, location, and recovery of child sex trafficking and child sexual exploitation victims.

5 Learn more about immigration assistance at dhs.gov/blue-campaign/immigration-assistance

ABOUT BLUE CAMPAIGN

Blue Campaign is a national public awareness campaign within DHS, designed to educate the public, law enforcement, and other industry partners to recognize the indicators of human trafficking, and how to appropriately respond to possible cases. Blue Campaign works closely with DHS components to create general awareness training and materials to increase detection of human trafficking, and to identify victims.

For additional human trafficking resources such as pamphlets, information sheets, and wallet cards, please visit Blue Campaign's resource webpage: dhs.gov/blue-campaign/share-resources.

Contact Blue Campaign

BlueCampaign@hq.dhs.gov

dhs.gov/bluecampaign

@dhsbluecampaign