



## HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN HOTELS AND MOTELS VICTIM AND LOCATION INDICATORS

*The following is a list of common indicators in hotels and motels that have been associated with situations of human trafficking in which individuals were compelled against their will to engage in commercial sex or forced labor. The indicators below are neither exhaustive nor cumulative in nature and each indicator taken alone may not necessarily imply a potential situation of human trafficking. This list is intended to encompass transnational and domestic human trafficking, as well as both sex and labor trafficking.*

### INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking is the use of force, fraud, or coercion to compel a person to provide labor, services or commercial sex against his or her will. It is a form of modern-day slavery—victimizing both foreign nationals and U.S. citizens. Minors under the age of 18 years induced into commercial sex are victims of sex trafficking—regardless of whether the trafficker used force, fraud, or coercion.

Human trafficking is one of the fastest growing criminal enterprises in the world—generating over \$32 billion a year in profits. It is occurring in the United States, including within the travel and tourism industry. Accordingly, the U.S. government has criminalized human trafficking and 49 U.S. states and Washington, D.C. have enacted state-level laws.



Source: Microsoft (Modified by Polaris Project)

### HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN HOTELS AND MOTELS

Human trafficking is a crime in which traffickers seek to exploit others for profit or personal benefit. Traffickers utilize all available resources or venues to help facilitate their crimes, including hotels and motels. Traffickers take advantage of the privacy and anonymity offered by hotels and motels, and they are able to operate with low risk when hotel staff and the community are not aware of the signs of human trafficking.

Hotels and motels are routinely used for sex trafficking where victims are compelled to provide commercial sex to paying customers. Victims may be forced to stay at a hotel or motel where customers come to them (in-call), or they are required to go to rooms rented out by the customers (out-call). Moreover, sex trafficking victims often stay in hotels and motels with their traffickers while moving to different cities or states.

Hotels and motels are also locations where labor trafficking can occur. Victims can be forced to work in hotels or motels by unscrupulous subcontracting companies or can be part of sales crews forced to sell products from city to city and reside in hotel/motel rooms while on the road. There have also been instances of hotel franchise owners directly engaging in human trafficking by fraudulently recruiting workers from overseas and compelling them to work under threats of and actual physical abuse.

With training and awareness about human trafficking, hotels and motels are in a unique and critical position to:

- ✓ Identify potential victims of human trafficking
- ✓ Report situations to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (1-888-373-7888)
- ✓ Educate staff and patrons about human trafficking and where to report
- ✓ Deter future situations of human trafficking at properties.

## VICTIM INDICATORS

The following indicators should be seen as red flags for identifying potential victims of human trafficking. These indicators were compiled based on actual cases, calls to the national hotline, and interaction with law enforcement as well as hotel staff.

Indicators	
Under 18 and induced into commercial sex.	Signs of physical abuse, restraint, or confinement.
Evidence of verbal threats.	Signs of emotional abuse or dependency on another.
Signs of malnourishment, poor hygiene, fatigue, sleep deprivation, changes in personality or behavior.	Signs of untreated illness, injuries, etc.
Signs of dissociation or avoidance of interaction with others, especially about sharing personal situation.	Restricted, mediated, or controlled communication.
No control over or possession of money or personal identification documents.	Dressed inappropriately for age or has lower quality clothing compared to others they are accompanied by.
Few or no personal possessions carried in small or plastic bags.	Appears to be with a significantly older “boyfriend” or in the company of older males.
No freedom of movement or constantly monitored.	Treated in a demeaning or aggressive manner.
No knowledge of current and/or past whereabouts.	Signs of fear, anxiety, tension, submission, or nervousness.
Unpaid, paid very little, paid only in tips, required daily/nightly quotas, or pay turned over to 3 <sup>rd</sup> party.	Mention of work conditions different from how advertised, working conditions, or wages.
Foreign nationals threatened with deportation.	Mention of large or growing debts to another person.
Suspicious tattoos or branding on women or girls.	Group of girls traveling with older male or female.

## VICTIM INDICATORS BY LOCATION

Hotel and motel employees are often in the best position to observe potential indicators of human trafficking, especially since their duties give them access to different areas of the properties. The following location indicators are divided into types of line employees who are in the best position to identify potential victims. These indicators are also likely to be visible to other employees as well as hotel or motel patrons.

## FRONT DESK, CONCIERGE, BELLMAN, AND DOORMAN

Front desk, concierge, bellmen, and doormen staff are in a key position to observe activity that could indicate a potential trafficking situation. Please keep in mind that the presence of just one of these indicators does not immediately mean that human trafficking is occurring. Instead, it is important to be vigilant of situations in which you identify multiple indicators.

Indicators	
Individuals checking into room appear distressed, coerced, or injured.	Room paid for with cash or rechargeable credit card.
Few or no personal possessions carried in small or plastic bags.	Excessive use of hotel computers for adult oriented websites.
Patrons not forthcoming about full names, home address, or vehicle information when registering.	Minor taking on adult roles or behaving older than actual age (paying bills, requesting services).
Patron appears with a minor that he did not come with originally.	Rentals of pornography when children are staying in the room.
Individuals dropped off at the hotel or visit repeatedly over a period of time.	Minor with patron late night or during school hours (and not on vacation).
Individuals checking into room have no identification.	Room is rented hourly, less than a day, or for long-term stay that does not appear normal.
Patron request for information or access to adult services or sex industry.	Room rented has fewer beds than patrons.
Individuals selling items to or begging from patrons or staff.	Minor accessing business center and frequenting social networking or sexually explicit websites.

## HOUSEKEEPING AND ROOM SERVICE

Housekeeping and room service staff is in a key position to observe activity that could indicate a potential trafficking situation. Please keep in mind that the presence of just one of these indicators does not immediately mean that human trafficking is occurring. Instead, it is important to be vigilant of situations in which you identify multiple indicators.

Indicators	
“Do Not Disturb” sign used constantly.	Refusal of cleaning services for multiple days.
Excessive amounts of cash in room.	Smell of bodily fluids and musk.
Presence of multiple computers, cell phones, pagers, credit card swipes, or other technology.	Individuals leaving room infrequently, not at all, or at odd hours.
Children’s items or clothing but no child registered with the room.	Individuals hanging out in hallways or appearing to monitor the area.
Excessive amounts alcohol or illegal drugs in rooms.	Minors left alone in room for long periods of time.

Excessive number of people staying in a room.	Extended stay with few or no personal possessions.
Provocative clothing and shoes.	Men waiting in the lobby or outside of the room.
Constant flow of men to a room at all hours.	Individuals selling items to other patrons or staff.
Excessive amounts of sex paraphernalia in rooms (condoms, lubricant, rubbing alcohol, lotion, etc.).	Individuals begging for money or food.
Rooms stocked with merchandise, luggage, mail packages, and purses/wallets with different names.	Individuals digging in hotel garbage or taking a lot of toiletries from housekeeping carts.

## RESTAURANT AND BAR

Restaurant and bar staff are in a key position to observe activity that could indicate a potential trafficking situation. Please keep in mind that the presence of just one of these indicators does not immediately mean that human trafficking is occurring. Instead, it is important to be vigilant of situations in which you identify multiple indicators.

Indicators	
Patron entertaining a minor at the bar or restaurant that he did not come in with originally.	Individuals loitering and soliciting male customers.
Patron requesting information or access to adult services or to local sex industry.	Individuals waiting at a table or bar and picked up by a male (trafficker or customer).
Individuals asking staff or patrons for food or money.	Individuals taking cash or receipts left on tables.
Individuals exhibiting anxious or nervous behavior and avoiding contact with staff and other patrons.	Individuals do not have identification, cell phones, or money of their own.

## ACTION STEPS AND RESOURCES

If a potential situation of human trafficking is uncovered, consider the following actions steps:

- ✓ Never interfere with a situation or attempt to assist the victim.
- ✓ Immediately alert the designated manager (General Manager, Director of Security, etc.) if indicators are observed.
- ✓ Contact the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at **1-888-373-7888** to report tips, to connect with trained law enforcement or a local task force, or for additional resources and referrals to social service providers.
- ✓ Call 9-1-1 for emergency situations (e.g. threats of violence, physical assault, emergency medical needs).
- ✓ Follow existing internal protocols that govern actions when criminal activity is suspected.

*Polaris Project is one of the leading organizations in the global fight against human trafficking and modern-day slavery. Named after the North Star "Polaris" that guided slaves to freedom along the Underground Railroad, Polaris Project is transforming the way that individuals and communities respond to human trafficking, in the U.S. and globally. By successfully pushing for stronger federal and state laws, operating the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline (1-888-373-7888), conducting trainings, and providing vital services to victims of trafficking, Polaris Project creates long-term solutions that move our society closer to a world without slavery. Learn more at [www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org).*

*The NHTRC is a national, toll-free hotline available to answer calls from anywhere in the country, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. Contact the NHTRC to report a tip; to connect with anti-trafficking resources in your area; or to request training and technical assistance, general information, or specific anti-trafficking resources. Call **1-888-373-7888**, email [nhtrc@polarisproject.org](mailto:nhtrc@polarisproject.org), or visit [www.traffickingresourcecenter.org](http://www.traffickingresourcecenter.org).*