

TRAFFICKING INDICATORS

PLEASE NOTE: The following list of trafficking indicators is neither definitive nor static. This list should not be used for profiling purposes, but as information to assist you in identifying whether an individual may be a victim of trafficking.

Key indicators

- Someone else has possession of legal/travel documents
- Existing debt issues
- One attorney claiming to represent multiple undocumented immigrants detained at different locations
- Third party who insists on interpreting

May Be Indicators

- Victim living/working conditions
- Live on or near work premises
- Restricted or controlled communication
- Frequently moved by traffickers
- Large number of occupants for living space

Victims may lack

- Personal items/possessions
- Cell phones, calling cards, etc.
- Private space
- Financial records
- Transportation
- Knowledge about how to get around in a community

Personal/physical indicators

- Injuries from beatings or weapons
- Signs of torture (e.g., cigarette burns)
- Brands or scarring indicating ownership
- Signs of malnourishment

Workplace indicators

- Security intended to keep victims confined
- Barbed wire
- Bars on windows
- Self-contained camps
- Bouncers, guards, and/or guard dogs
- Only allowed to shop at “Company Store”

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Forced Prostitution

- Large amounts of cash and condoms
- Customer logbook or receipt book (a.k.a. “trick book”)
- Sparse rooms
- Men come and go frequently
- PLUS other trafficking indicators

Identifying Offenders

- Do they maintain employee records?
- Do they file social security deductions?
- Who does their payroll?
- How are employees paid?
- How do they determine employee wages?
- Who is their accountant?
- What are their hours of operation?
- Do they have a written vacation policy?
- Where do employees’ children go to school?

Victim Realities

- May not identify themselves as victims
- May not speak English
- Likely to use rehearsed stories initially
- May be behaviorally dependent on trafficker
- Trauma, shame, lack of trust may deter victims from telling the full story
- Victims may be reluctant to speak to someone wearing a gun, badge, or uniform
- Victim may not want family to know of his/her circumstances
- Victim may exhibit “Stockholm Syndrome” behavior
- Empathy for traffickers
- Concerned for safety of the victim’s family in the home country
- Victim Interview Considerations
- Victim should be given a choice of speaking with male or female
- Use informal conversation
- Allow victim to set length and pace
- Watch for nonverbal cues
- Do not make promises
- Do not videotape or audiotape initial conversations
- Victim services/nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) should be involved as soon as possible—even if only a slight indication of victimization
- Don’t expect to get full story right away