



## WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT THAT YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS BEING EXPLOITED OR TRAFFICKED?

A wide range of social support is available for victims of human trafficking including housing assistance, referrals to health professionals, psychological and social support, and legal aid including advice on immigration status, employment standards redress, civil and criminal complaints. British Columbia has trained professionals with the expertise to provide survivors of trafficking with comprehensive case support.

It is important to note that this support is available to all victims of human trafficking, even individuals that do not have valid work permits or other identification documents. Victims of human trafficking who are without status can apply for temporary resident permits to regularize their immigration status.

In British Columbia, **the Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons** works on preventing human trafficking and coordinating services for trafficked persons.

If you suspect that you or anyone you know is a victim of exploitation or human trafficking, please call:

**1-888-712-7974**

This number is toll-free in BC, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Specialists trained to work with survivors of human trafficking will be on hand to provide support. Interpretation is available in over 110 languages.

## RESOURCES

For emergencies call: **9-1-1**

**Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons**  
1-888-712-7974 (toll-free in BC 24 hours / 7 days a week)  
604-660-5199  
Interpretation is available in over 110 languages.

### RCMP

Human Trafficking Awareness Coordinator  
[pacifichumantraffickingcoordinator@rcmp-grc.gc.ca](mailto:pacifichumantraffickingcoordinator@rcmp-grc.gc.ca)

### Crime-Stoppers

To report a crime anonymously: 1-800-222-8477

### West Coast Domestic Workers Association

#302-119 West Pender  
Vancouver, BC V6B 1S5  
1-888-669-4482 (Toll-free)  
604-669-4482  
[www.wcdwa.ca](http://www.wcdwa.ca)

### MOSAIC

1720 Grant St., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Vancouver, BC V5L 2Y7  
Phone: 604-254-9626  
[www.mosaicbc.com](http://www.mosaicbc.com)

### WorkSafe BC

1-888- 967-5377  
[www.worksafebc.com](http://www.worksafebc.com)

### Employment Standards Branch

[www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb/](http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb/)

### Citizenship and Immigration Canada

1-888-242-2100  
[www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)



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# MODERN DAY SLAVERY



**Combating  
the Exploitation and Trafficking  
of Foreign Workers  
in Our Communities**



## WHO IS A “FOREIGN WORKER”?

A foreign worker is an individual who is working in Canada who is not a Canadian citizen or a Canadian permanent resident. Every year, over 150,000 foreign workers come to Canada to work in a wide variety of jobs including: live-in caregivers, agricultural workers, engineers, doctors, people working in the construction industry and people working in hospitality.

All workers in Canada, including foreign workers are protected by Canadian law including employment, labor and criminal law. Even if you are a foreign worker without a valid work permit, you are still protected by the law.

## WHAT IS “HUMAN TRAFFICKING”?

Human trafficking is a growing global crime. The United Nations estimates that at any given time, there are about 2.5 million people who are in forced labour, including sexual exploitation, as a result of human trafficking<sup>1</sup>, with an annual global revenues of \$31.6 billion<sup>2</sup>.

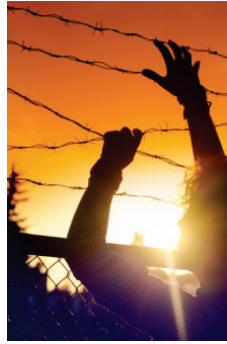
In international law and Canadian law, trafficking is defined as the act of recruiting, transporting, holding or receiving people by the use of force, lies, fraud, abuse of power, or payment for the purpose of exploitation. People who are trafficked are forced, manipulated, deceived or coerced into performing labor or services against their will. Often, they fear for their safety or the safety of someone they know.

The crime of human trafficking *does not* necessarily involve any type of transportation, transfer or movement of individuals. In other words, trafficking can- and does-happen within Canadian borders. What defines trafficking is the control of persons for the purposes of exploitation and the use of manipulation, deception, coercion or force.

## FRAUDULENT RECRUITMENT

Often, foreign workers pay thousands of dollars in illegal placement fees to “employment agencies” that broker their employment in Canada. Many workers arrive in Canada only to learn that they have no job in Canada or discover that the job is substantially different from the one they signed up for.

New to Canada, with no place to live, no means of support, and in debt because of placement fees, many workers turn to the same agent or different agents for further assistance.



Agents often promise the worker that his or her status can be regularized for a fee, using the threat of deportation or other forms of coercion as means of control. In the meantime, the agent persuades the worker to perform unauthorized work or “work under the table.”

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING OF FOREIGN WORKERS

Anyone can become a victim of human trafficking, but foreign workers can be particularly vulnerable to labour exploitation for many reasons. Many foreign workers have few employment options, are socially isolated because they are new to the country, have accumulated debt in order to leave their country and encounter language barriers. A foreign worker is particularly vulnerable if he or she comes from a country of economic or political instability, and seeks to have a better life but have few economic or social opportunities to do so.

Some common examples of labour trafficking include:

- Individuals working without legal work permits in homes as live-in caregivers or domestics, forced to toil for long hours with no breaks, no days off, for little pay because they fear being reported to the authorities;
- Seasonal farm workers threatened that they will be blacklisted and not permitted to return to work in Canada if they do not comply with an employer's demands.
- Short order cooks or food service staff at fast food restaurants who work 12- to 14-hour days for little pay in exchange for their employer's promise for selection or nomination for permanent residence pursuant to a provincial nominee program.
- Factory workers forced to work in unsafe and unsanitary conditions while most of their income is diverted to pay recruitment fees.

In all such situations, traffickers target more vulnerable foreign workers, using violence, threats, lies, and intimidation to force them to work, and to believe that they have no choice but to continue working.

## HOW TO TELL IF A FOREIGN WORKER MAY BE EXPLOITED OR TRAFFICKED?

You, or someone you know, may be an exploited or trafficked foreign worker if one or more of the following conditions apply to you:

- you are forced to work or provide service she or he does not want to provide;
- you work for little or no pay under poor conditions;
- you are forced to work excessive hours and not allowed breaks;
- you are insulted, abused and threatened with violence;
- you are confined in high security conditions in work/living areas that prevent you from communicating with others or leaving the work/living place;
- you have no control and access to your passport or other personal identification documents;
- you have restrictions on when and where you can go and what you can do;
- you are always accompanied by someone else who speaks for you;
- you have health issues that have not been treated;
- you are fearful and anxious in general or of the police or other authority specifically
- are denied privacy where you live and/or live in shared, over-crowded accommodation with your colleagues;
- you are threatened by your employer with violence, harm, arrest or deportation;
- you have limited contact with friends, family or others in the community;



<sup>1</sup> International Labour Organization, *Forced Labour Statistics Factsheet* (2007)

<sup>2</sup> Patrick Besler, *Forced Labour and Human Trafficking : Estimating the Profits*, working paper (geneva, Internal Labour Office, 2005)