



## Human Trafficking in Short Term Rentals

Every day, thousands of employees working in the hospitality industry witness indicators of human trafficking and fail to report it—all too often because they do not recognize the signs when they see them. The hospitality industry has grown to now include short term rentals such as Airbnbs, which operate in nearly 200 countries and has facilitated more than 260 million home and room rentals. **Here is what you need to know as a proprietor:**

### **Why do YOU need to be aware?**

Ten years of data and analysis from Polaris’ operation of the National Human Trafficking Hotline found 3,376 cases of human trafficking involving hotels or motels as a business venue. Between January 2015 and September 2017, 2,680 victims and survivors were identified who had been trafficked at hotels and motels.

**Human traffickers may opt to use short term rentals such as Airbnb instead of motels or similar venues because of the greater possibility for anonymity.**

### **What is Human Trafficking?**

Human trafficking, or modern-day slavery, is the illegal trading, either domestically or internationally, of human beings for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation or forced labor. It is the fastest growing criminal industry in the world. It is estimated that there are approximately 24.9 million human trafficking victims worldwide.

### **Who does it affect?**

Victims of human trafficking include men, women, boys and girls. Your next-door neighbor may be a victim OR perpetrator of human trafficking.

### **Sex trafficking**

It is a commercial sex act induced by force, fraud or coercion, or if the person performing the act is not yet 18 years of age. Venues may include:

- Residential brothels
- escort services
- strip clubs
- Street prostitution
- Hotels, motels, short term rentals
- Massage/Body Work

### **Labor trafficking**

Is defined as recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining people for forced or coerced labor. The coercion could be threats directed at the victim or someone else. It is often linked with exploitation of a worker.

Venues may include:

- Sweatshops
- Restaurants
- Nail Salons
- Construction Sites

### **Resources**

**Montgomery County Police Department:** (301) 279-8000  
**Montgomery County Crisis Center (24/7):** (240) 777-4000  
**University of Maryland SAFE Center:** (301) 314-7233  
**Montgomery County Commission for Women:** (240) 777-8300  
**National Human Trafficking Hotline:** 1 (888) 373-7888  
**FAIR Girls:** 1 (855) 900-3247

### **Warning signs you should look for...**

- Someone who is accompanied by a person who acts as a dominant figure. Also, if their age difference and appearance are concerning
- Multiple people coming in and out of the residence late at night
- If someone does not have identification, or if someone else is in possession of their identification
- If a person is fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, or nervous/paranoid
- If someone is dressed inappropriately, or looks unhealthy and disheveled
- Someone who avoids eye contact
- Someone who has few or no personal possessions
- If someone lacks knowledge of whereabouts and/or of what city he/she is in

**IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING!**