



Natural Disasters and Severe Weather

Human Trafficking in the Wake of a Disaster

Information and resources for shelter operators



Do you manage evacuation shelters or provide alternate camps and sites for care? Then you likely know that disasters affect the most vulnerable populations. But do you know that disasters make people especially vulnerable to human trafficking? Use this information in your shelter and share it with others who provide these services so we all know more about how to recognize and act to prevent human trafficking before it happens.

Human trafficking is a serious public health concern, both domestically and worldwide.

- Human trafficking is a crime that occurs when a trafficker compels a victim by force, fraud, or coercion to perform labor, services, or commercial sex. Anyone can be targeted by a trafficker.
- Perpetrators of human trafficking manipulate and exploit others' vulnerabilities for profit.
- Even if victims initially consent to go with or work for the perpetrator, that consent is rendered meaningless when perpetrators exploit them for labor, services, or commercial sex.

Instability after a disaster can make people especially vulnerable to trafficking.

People may be more vulnerable because they are:

- Displaced from their homes (temporarily living in a shelter)
- Separated from family and friends
- Disconnected from supportive services
- Unable to safely earn income and be self-sufficient

People who don't speak a local language may be more vulnerable because they:

- Can't communicate to authorities
- Are afraid of physical harm or stigma
- Have no access to assistance, services, or protection provided by local laws

Some populations are at higher risk for human trafficking.

While anyone can be affected by human trafficking, some populations you may encounter in your work are at higher risk:

- Migrant and seasonal workers, refugees, or asylees
- Disconnected or homeless youth or runaways
- People with physical, emotional, or cognitive disabilities
- Native persons
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex (someone who has natural bodily variations), and Two-Spirit (Native American or Alaskan Native who combine activities or traits of both men and women) individuals
- Persons with a substance use disorder or with a history of substance use
- Those transitioning out of child welfare, foster care, or juvenile justice and prison systems
- Members of lower socio-economic groups
- Survivors of other forms of violence

Traffickers gain control over victims by exploiting their vulnerabilities.

During environmental or public health disasters, traffickers can control victims through their need for basic resources such as food, water, and shelter. Other control methods include:










- Physically assaulting or threatening serious harm
- Psychologically manipulating or shaming
- Providing false promises about work or living conditions
- Pretending to have an intimate relationship
- Pretending to provide protection
- Withholding wages or debt bondage
- Isolating the victim

Resources



If you think someone may be a victim of human trafficking, call or encourage them to call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 888-373-7888. Or, text "HELP" or "INFO" to 233733.

The resources below provide information about how to identify human trafficking and act accordingly. The majority of these resources can be printed and shared with shelter workers.







Printouts for Shelters

- National Human Trafficking Hotline Flyer: <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/get-involved/downloadable-resources> 
- Human Trafficking Fact Sheet: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/otip/fact_sheet_human_trafficking_fy18.pdf  [PDF – 203 KB] 
- ASPR Healthcare Preventing Human Trafficking Infographic: <https://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/planning/abc/Documents/disaster-resp-trafficking.pdf>  [PDF – 561 KB] 
- ASPR Human Trafficking Infographic: <https://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/planning/abc/Documents/human-trafficking-infographic.pdf>  [PDF – 1.4 MB] 
- What is Human Trafficking? (in several languages) <https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/materials/human-trafficking-101> 
- Pamphlets, Cards, and Posters: <https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/library> 


General Information

- Safety Tips for Families (in English and Spanish): <http://www.missingkids.org/ourwork/disasters> 
 - Missing Children Resources: <http://www.missingkids.org/ourwork/publications#safetyandprevention> 
 - Understanding Sex Trafficking: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/trafficking.html>
 - Helping Children Cope:
 - English and Spanish: <https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/helping-children-cope.html>
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Toolkits

- Toolkit for Hospitality Employees:
 - English: <https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/blue-campaign/toolkits/hospitality-toolkit-eng.pdf>  [PDF – 903 KB] 
 - Spanish: <https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/blue-campaign/toolkits/hospitality-toolkit-spa.pdf>  [PDF – 1.4 MB] 
 - Rescue & Restore Campaign Tool Kits for Healthcare Providers, Social Service Providers, and Law Enforcement: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/resource/rescue-restore-campaign-tool-kits> 
 - City of Houston Emergency Disaster Response Toolkit: <https://humantraffickinghouston.org/toolkits/emergency-disaster-response-toolkit/> 
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Online Training

- SOAR to Health and Wellness Online Training Modules about Seeing the Signs of Human Trafficking: <https://www.train.org/main/search?type=course&query=SOAR> 
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