

ABSTRACT

Sex trafficking is defined as “a commercial sex act that is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age or the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery” (USC, Title 22, Chapter 78, 7102, Sec. 9A and B). Whether we realize or not, sex trafficking is looming specifically in hotel and lodging facilities. The ease of traffickers to use hotels and remain anonymous is a key factor in why sex trafficking in hotels is continuing to grow.

The purpose of this study is to put policies in place for local Nacogdoches hotels to help end sex trafficking. In providing training and policies to put into place, the hope is that these hotels will implement the policies to help fight human trafficking.

INTRODUCTION

Hotels offer anonymity where the trafficker, or the person doing the trafficking, can remain unidentified and can remain untraceable. Sex trafficking affects every type of hotel, no matter in a rural or busy city area. Sex trafficking is 365 day crime. While hotel owners feel that sex trafficking is a global problem, they do not believe that it happens in their own hotel. Hotel operators and travelers have a history of turning a blind eye to the issue, not out of malice but because of miseducation. We conducted a survey and sent it to 5 local Nacogdoches hotels.

1. Do you have any sex trafficking policies in place? If yes, please explain. If not, why?
2. Are you aware of any sex trafficking going on in the hotel?
3. Do you provide training for your employees about sex trafficking?
4. What would you do if sex trafficking happens in your facility?
5. Make recommendations on a policy or training that they should implement.

METHOD

Sadly, sex trafficking has made its way into the hospitality industry. Many people are unaware of the situation that is happening in the room next door. “To solve a problem, we must first acknowledge that one exists. In the case of human trafficking, hotel operators and travelers have a history of turning a blind eye to the issue, often not out of malice but because of miseducation” (5 Misconceptions). Many people don’t realize that trafficking is big in the hospitality industry, let alone in the hotel they are staying at. A common misconception is that sex trafficking only happens at the old beaten down properties in the middle of nowhere, but it “takes place in all hotel segments, in all types of locations and at any time. This takes place in literally every kind of property and every segment” (5 Misconceptions). With this point of view, most hotels are not properly trained or even trained at all on how to spot the signs of human trafficking.

Hospitality Fighting Against Sex Trafficking

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RESULTS

Hotels are becoming more aware of what sex trafficking is and how it impacts their property. Today, more and more hotels are standing up to fight against sex trafficking by partnering with EPCAT-USA or adopting The Code. EPCAT’s mission is to protect every child’s human right to grow up free from the threat of sexual exploitation and trafficking. A world in which no child is bought, sold, or used for sex. EPCAT advocates for federal and state legislation that prevents exploitation, promotes corporate responsibility among private companies with a strong focus on the tourism sector, educates first responders and ordinary citizens about this issue, and empowers youth to take the lead against human trafficking by equipping them with the knowledge and tools necessary to help them become activist against his terrible trade. (EPCAT International). Marriott International is one of the biggest lodging brands that is partnered with EPCAT-USA and The Code. Other big brands such as Hilton Worldwide, Hyatt Hotels Corporation, and Wyndham Hotels & Resorts are partners as well. The Code is short for “The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism” is a multi-stakeholder initiative with the mission to provide awareness, tools and support to the tourism industry to prevent the sexual exploitation of children. (The Code). Hilton has published the “Hilton Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement” from the financial year 2017. In this statement, “it details the steps taken by Hilton to aid in the prevention of modern slavery and human trafficking in any part of its business and supply chains during the Financial Year 2017” (Vincent, S. 2017). This statement provides in detail that “announced in December 2017 that anti-trafficking training would be mandatory for all hotels globally as part of our required Brand Training. Since the launch of the mandatory training and until the end 2017, more than 4,300 Team Members at more than 200 properties had already taken the training” (Vincent, S. 2017). Hilton is a member of the International Tourism Partnership, which brings together hotel brands, and is an active member of their Human Rights Policy Statement Human Rights Goals.

CONCLUSION

After the survey is completed, we will analyze the data and come up with a policy or different procedures that the hotels can implement to fight sex trafficking in their hotels. These suggestions will come from research over policies and procedures that are already in place in different hotels and will also come from training from EPCAT USA. We hope that after making these suggestions, the hotels will begin to implement our suggestions to help the fight against sex trafficking.

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HOTEL AND MOTEL STAFF

Individuals show signs of malnourishment, poor hygiene, fatigue, sleep deprivation, untreated illness, injuries, and/or unusual behavior.

Individuals lack freedom of movement or are constantly monitored.

Individuals have no control over or possession of money or ID.

Individuals dress inappropriately for their age or have lower quality clothing compared to others in their party.



CONCIERGE, BELLMAN, FRONT DESK, SECURITY & VALET STAFF

The same person reserves multiple rooms.

Room is rented hourly, less than a day, or for long-term stay that does not appear normal.

Individuals selling items to or begging from patrons or staff.

Car parking lot regularly parked backward, so the license plate is not visible.

