

How Public Transit Can Combat Human Trafficking

A TOOLKIT FOR
IMPLEMENTING
ANTI-TRAFFICKING
INITIATIVES



www.tatnonprofit.org/transit



WHY PUBLIC TRANSIT HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN HELPING TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING



What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking – or modern-day slavery – is a global crime in which people are bought and sold for forced labor or commercial sex. Traffickers use violence, manipulation and false promises of work opportunities or romance to lure, control and exploit their victims, generating billions of dollars per year in illicit profits. Of the estimated 50 million victims worldwide, thousands of girls, boys, women and men are trafficked for sex or labor in the U.S. and Canada.

Why public transit?

Public transit agencies encounter human trafficking victims in a variety of ways. The populations most at-risk for trafficking are also those most likely to use public transportation, due to its accessibility and affordability. Traffickers may go to bus stops or transit centers to find potential victims or use public transportation to shuttle their victims to and from places where they will be sold. When survivors attempt to exit trafficking, a bus, train or transit center may be the first place they will go to find safety or escape. ***This means that public transportation can be a key touchpoint for reaching these vulnerable populations, both for prevention and education, as well as for identification and intervention.***

This toolkit guides transit agencies on how to implement anti-human trafficking training for all employees, as well as the protocols and policies necessary to make training effective.

TRANSIT AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING: INTERSECTIONS

- 60 percent of survivors reported a bus (e.g., intercity, public, long-distance, shuttle) was used during their recruitment into trafficking.
- 75 percent reported a bus was used during their exploitation.
- 35 percent went to a bus or subway station while being trafficked.
- 28 percent reported a bus was used during their escape from trafficking.

(source: National Outreach Survey for Transportation 2021)



TAT partners with public transit agencies to ensure all employees – drivers, conductors, customer service representatives, dispatch, security guards, etc. – know how to recognize and report human trafficking.



HOW TO IMPLEMENT TAT TRAINING

We encourage partners to provide TAT training to current employees and incorporate the training into your onboarding process for new employees. There are four ways you can implement TAT training:

01 In-person

Show TAT's Transit training video to a group that has gathered in-person and pass out wallet cards. The trainer can either use a DVD or download the training video and red flag recap as mp4 files.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR IN-PERSON TAT TRAINING

TAT's free training videos are intended to be self-sufficient resources. For enhanced training, consider sharing the following points alongside the video:

- Training participants often have questions about reporting procedures. If available, share your agency's reporting protocol and review the steps to take.
- Allocate time for discussion. Use the notes provided in the FAQ at the end of this toolkit as a guide.
- Share the "TAT in Action" examples included in this toolkit.
- If desired, TAT can create a co-branded certificate for the training facilitator to fill out and distribute to participants.

To receive printed materials or files for download, contact info@tatnonprofit.org.

02 TAT Education Portal

Individuals can get TAT-certified virtually via the TAT education portal. Participants register on the website and can then watch the 16-minute TAT Transit training video, after which they will be prompted to take a short quiz. If they receive a score of 70 percent or above, the system auto-generates a certificate with their name and completion date on it. Access the portal at education.truckersagainstrafficking.org.

03 Internal Online Learning System

TAT will work with transit agencies and/or their contractors to upload our training materials (including the video, quiz and a co-branded certificate) to your internal learning management system or online training program. Entities who add TAT's training to their online learning systems are asked to share training numbers with TAT on a quarterly or semiannual basis.

TAT TRANSIT RESOURCES

TAT's free, niche-specific resources for transit include a 16-minute training video, a wallet card, an app, driver room posters, a reporting protocol template, victim-centered posters, youth awareness materials and a backgrounder on labor trafficking.

To review TAT's training materials for transit, visit www.tatnonprofit.org/training-library.

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National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP)

TAT has been partnering with RTAP since May 2019 to reach rural and tribal transit agencies throughout the United States. Transit agencies who do training through RTAP can route their employees via that system to watch the TAT video, take a quiz and receive a cobranded TAT/RTAP certificate.

TAT provides all training materials free of charge. All that we ask in return is that you report your training numbers to us once training is completed. Visit trained.truckersagainsttrafficking.org or contact info@tatnonprofit.org.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT RESPONSE PROTOCOLS

In order for human trafficking training to be truly effective, trainees must know exactly how to report suspicions of trafficking, and agencies must be prepared to respond to those reports. This is why it's important to adopt internal human trafficking response protocols alongside training.

If your agency already has human trafficking response protocols in place, be sure to share them with employees alongside any human trafficking training provided. If you do not have a protocol, TAT's Human Trafficking Response Procedure Template is an adaptable and adoptable tool that helps ensure frontline employees, dispatch and safety supervisors know the appropriate responses if they suspect a human trafficking situation.



Supported in its development by the Florida Department of Transportation's Statewide Transit Training and Technical Assistance Program, with input from the Florida Transit Safety and Operations Network, the template offers suggested protocol language for frontline employees, dispatch and supervisors in various scenarios. **Download the Word template here: bit.ly/TAT_TransitPolicyTemplate.**

TAT IN ACTION

These are real life examples from transit partners who have seen first-hand the importance of TAT training.

Ontario

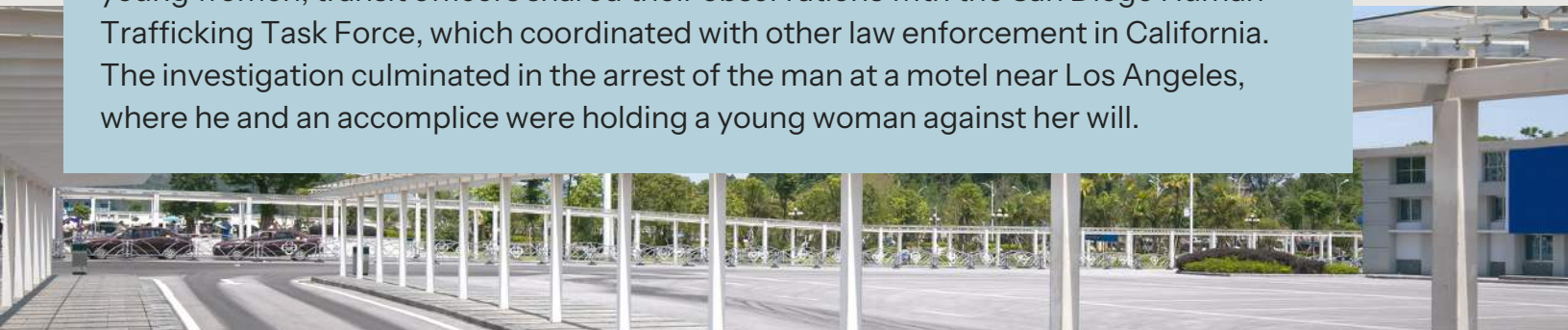
After receiving training on human trafficking, a Metrolinx revenue protection officer in Ontario met a young woman exhibiting some common red flags associated with human trafficking. She was traveling alone on a train with no fare payment, and with no money or ID. She said she was traveling to Niagara Falls to meet a man she met on the internet but had no plans once she arrived there. The revenue protection officer encouraged her to pause her trip. She agreed to get off the train, and the officer took her to meet a Metrolinx special constable. The special constable helped the young woman contact her mother and arranged for a taxi to bring her to a safe location.

Washington

One week after a transit agency in Washington State showed the TAT Transit training video at a monthly staff safety meeting, an emotionally distraught young woman came into their transit center. She had bruising on her face and abrasions all over her body. An employee approached the young woman to see if she needed help and learned that she had just been released from the hospital after being beaten, raped and robbed. She didn't know what city she was in, had no phone and no money. She'd come to the transit center to find transportation to a friend who she believed was safe. The employee helped her contact the friend and got her a bus ticket.

California

Not long after the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System rolled out its anti-trafficking program, which included the TAT Transit video, their security personnel made note of a man at one of their transit centers acting aggressively toward a young woman. When the same man later returned to the transit center and was seen approaching other young women, transit officers shared their observations with the San Diego Human Trafficking Task Force, which coordinated with other law enforcement in California. The investigation culminated in the arrest of the man at a motel near Los Angeles, where he and an accomplice were holding a young woman against her will.



BEYOND TRAINING: WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

In addition to TAT-training your staff, here are additional things you can do:

Connect

Get in touch with the anti-human trafficking task force in your city or state/province. These task forces can be resources for training and response protocols. You could also be able to provide them with valuable information for investigations.

Protect

If youth are relying on your services, display TAT's youth-oriented awareness materials, which include short videos, posters and social media graphics. Visit www.tatnonprofit.org/youth-on-transportation.

Post

TAT worked with survivors of trafficking to create posters intended to be eye-catching for victims to learn about resources to help them. These can be displayed on buses, at bus stops, in transit centers, etc. Visit www.tatnonprofit.org/training-library.

Display

If you have an office, break room or locker room for your drivers, hang our poster up as a reminder for all staff to be on the lookout.

Feedback

Share your reactions or a quote about the training with us and be sure to tell TAT if an employee takes action related to a potential trafficking case. If they make a call to report suspicions of human trafficking or aid a potential victim, they could be eligible for TAT's prestigious Harriet Tubman Award.

Attend

Attend and/or co-host a TAT Coalition Build (CB). CBs are strategic events designed to build local public-private partnerships to combat trafficking. Reach out to TAT for more information.

Share

Spread awareness about human trafficking with other transit agencies, trade associations, via internal or external publications, etc. Distribute our regular training tips and monthly newsletters to your drivers.

Stay in Touch

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, X and/or LinkedIn for regular updates and information. Encourage your drivers to do the same.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does human trafficking look like in the United States and Canada?

Traffickers use lies, threats, violence and manipulation to lure and exploit their victims. Traffickers come from all types of racial, ethnic, gender and socio-economic backgrounds. Anyone could be trafficked, but due to how traffickers operate, people with heightened vulnerabilities are at greater risk. Therefore, young people, children in foster care, runaway youth, the homeless, immigrants, people who identify as LGBTQIA2S+, or those with a history of abuse are particularly susceptible. Victims of human trafficking are disproportionately Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color.

What are some signs you might notice that could indicate human trafficking?

Human trafficking red flags for transit include:

- Restricted or controlled communication; not allowed to speak for self; being watched or followed
- Not in possession of own ticket or ID
- Disheveled appearance, unkept, alone, scared/crying
- Offers to exchange sex for a ride, meal, etc.
- Does not know the person picking them up
- Any mention that she/he has a "sugar daddy," older boyfriend, has formed a relationship with someone online and/or is making a quota
- Signs of branding or tattooing (often of trafficker's name)

Keep in mind that multiple indicators will most likely present themselves when this crime is occurring.

If you suspect human trafficking, what should you do?

Follow your agency's reporting protocol. If you're not sure what to do, report your suspicions to dispatch, security and/or your supervisor as soon as it is safe to do so. In an emergency or if someone is in immediate danger, call 911. The National Human Trafficking Hotline (U.S.) or the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline are also available resources, which TAT includes on all its materials. The hotlines have 24/7 trained specialists who can help you determine if you are interacting with a victim and connect victims to local resources. US: 1-888-3737-888 Text: 233733 | CAN: 1-833-900-1010.

What kinds of questions should you ask a person if you suspect they are being trafficked or groomed?

Many victims of human trafficking may not identify as victims, may not know what "trafficking" is, or may misunderstand it. Depending on what you suspect, the following questions could show a potential victim you are concerned and help you learn more to determine next steps:

- Are you okay?
- Do you know the person who is picking you up?
- Do you feel safe with the person you're traveling with?
- Do your parents/siblings/relatives know where you are? If not, why not?
- Are you free to come and go as you please?
- Are you or your family being threatened? What is the nature of the threats?
- Is anyone forcing you to do things that make you feel uncomfortable or unsafe or violate your boundaries or beliefs?

If you are concerned they are being trafficked for labor, ask them additional questions about their job:

- What are the conditions like? Do you feel safe there?
- What hours are you working?
- Are you getting paid for all the hours you work?
- How are you treated by your employer?
- Do you have any choices about where you work?



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TAT stands committed to educate, equip, empower and mobilize members of key industries and agencies to combat human trafficking.