



**WINTER 2017**

SWAN Vancouver

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**What is SWANzine?**

The SWANzine newsletter is a guide to health, legal, social, employment, and community information for women engaged in indoor sex work in the Lower Mainland. English and Chinese versions are available. If you require SWANzine in another language, please let us know.



If there is a topic you would like to see in SWANzine, please send us your questions or comments.



# SWANzine

## SWAN has a new project and we need your help by Dec. 31, 2016

We have a new project on workplace safety, and we need your input. We are interested in reducing violence and exploitation in the workplace. When bad things happen at work, SWAN would like to better understand how you respond. In doing so, we hope to identify ways in which we can improve our services. We also hope to uncover ways in which the criminal justice system can better meet your needs. You may have already been contacted by some of our outreach workers in person or via WeChat. If you are a migrant or immigrant woman, we ask for your help through either the completion of a survey (\$10) and/or participation in an interview (\$50).

You may have participated in surveys or interviews before and feel that your input did not contribute to tangible improvements to your work environment. You may have never even seen the final results of the surveys in which you participated. If you participate in this project, we will report back to you next spring on what we found. As part of this project, we will be asking you how you would like to receive this information (e.g., booklet, meeting). Even if you do not want to participate in this project, you will have access to the findings. For more information or to participate in the project, please contact us at 778-865-6343/[info@swanvancouver.ca](mailto:info@swanvancouver.ca)

Don't think your voice can help make positive changes? On page 2, we highlight some recent examples of how SWAN has been successful in advocating for changes that affect your work based on your support and ongoing input.



SWAN Interviewers Kelly and Angela

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## Vancouver

SWAN provided input into the development of the Vancouver Police Department's (VPD) Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines video that outline the VPD's commitment to the safety, dignity and well-being of those engaged in the sex industry. These guidelines state that **“sex work involving consenting adults is not an enforcement priority for the VPD.”**

SWAN felt this change in policing was important for you to know. After all, what good are guidelines if no one knows about them? SWAN advocated for the need of a video to make the Guidelines more accessible to the women they affect, and also the need for a Chinese version. English version available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-gKafib7TN4>

SWAN was also involved in the development of the City of Vancouver's Sex Work Response Guidelines (<http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/sex-work-response-guidelines.pdf>) that highlight the City's dedication to the health and safety of sex workers, with objectives for city staff that ensure fair, unbiased, equitable and non-discriminatory treatment of individuals engaged in the sex industry. With these guidelines came bylaws amendments that make working in licensed massage shops safer.

## Richmond

For many years, SWAN has tried to open a dialogue with Richmond RCMP to reduce heavy-handed and harmful practices, most notably raids on massage parlours. In the past eight months, SWAN has made a breakthrough with the Richmond RCMP through education and advocacy. With this, the Richmond RCMP is examining the way they have approached sex work in the past. They are shifting their approach to increase trust and build relationships so that if you ever need to call them, they will respond in a way that is more respectful and understanding than you've seen before. As such, in November, SWAN trained all Richmond RCMP frontline officers so that they respond in a more informed way that is sensitive to your safety concerns.

## Burnaby

SWAN has worked with the Burnaby RCMP to informally dedicate a position in their detachment that serves as a sex work liaison officer who has a better understanding of sex work that we can call if you need to report a crime.

SWAN has had a conversation with the City of Burnaby about the negative impacts of their municipal bylaws, such as how the front door of a massage shop must be unlocked even if this compromises the safety of workers. While this is a work in progress, the City of Burnaby has been willing to talk to us about this. Nevertheless, bylaw change is a lengthy process as amendments are difficult to do and must be approved by City Council. We typically have more success asking for non-enforcement of bylaws rather than a change in the bylaws themselves as it is a complicated process that usually occurs only when the entire community expresses the need for change.

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## Healthcare Updates

Referrals to low-barrier healthcare services is SWAN's number one request. **We do not have nurses** but SWAN works hard to make sure the nurses and doctors we refer you to are safe, non-judgmental and don't ask too many personal questions. Here are some examples of healthcare providers in different municipalities that are safe for you to go to with your healthcare needs. They offer STI and HIV testing, pap tests, contraception, and many other healthcare services.

### Vancouver Women's Health Collective (VWHC)

29 West Hastings St. Vancouver  
604-736-5262

Hours (drop-in/appointment): Monday 9:30 am – 4:30 pm, Tuesday – Thursday 1:00 pm – 4:30 pm, Friday 9:30 am – 1:30 pm.

SWAN has been working with the VWHC for several years, including training their staff on ways to best meet your needs. You can access their services anonymously and do not need MSP coverage. Basic services are free, but sometimes you may need a referral outside of the clinic (e.g., specialist, ultrasound). If you have MSP, these referrals are likely covered, but if you do not, you will likely have to pay. If you have MSP coverage, it is always best to use it at VWHC in case you need to be referred outside the clinic or need testing done at the lab. If you use your MSP, the clinic will never share your visit or results with your family doctor.

### Surrey North Community Health Centre

10697 135A St. Surrey 604-583-5666

We have recently started working with Lucinda, a nurse at the Surrey North Community Health Centre. She speaks English and Cantonese, and has done outreach to massage shops in the past. STI and HIV testing can be done anonymously; however real names are needed for pap tests. While this clinic has drop-in hours only, Lucinda is available Monday - Wednesday mornings by appointment for SWAN clients. Please call SWAN at 604-719-6343 to book an appointment.

### Options for Sexual Health (Opt Clinics)

For women outside of Vancouver and Surrey, there are several Opt Clinics in various municipalities. While SWAN cannot vouch for individual health care providers at these clinics because we have not provided training to them, Options for Sexual Health as an organization is dedicated to low-barrier healthcare access and advocates for the decriminalization of

#### Metrotown Opt Clinic

4734 Imperial St., Burnaby  
604 731-4252

Hours (by appointment only): Wed 7 - 9 pm

#### Surrey Opt Clinic

20-10362 King George Hwy., Surrey  
604 731-4252

Hours (drop-in): 2nd & 4th Tuesday of the month 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.  
By appointment for Pap screening, STI testing/treatment, and to see a physician; call to schedule Mon - Fri 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.



To see a full listing of Opt clinics in other municipalities, visit <https://www.optionsforsexualhealth.org/providers>

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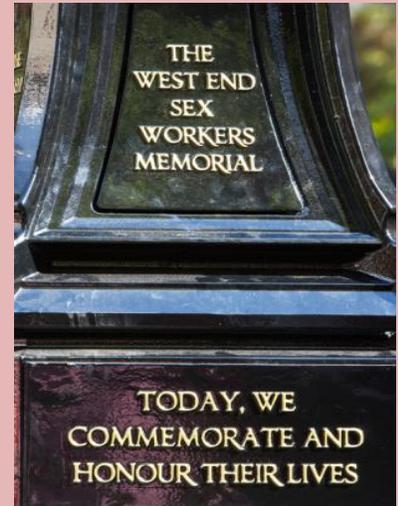
SWAN has received funding to expand our outreach services! We will be in Surrey every third Thursday of the month with safer sex supplies, information and staff to connect you with any services or answer any questions. If you live or work in Surrey and would like us to stop by when we are in your area, let us know. Tell your friends who work or live in Surrey about our services! Please remember, we do not require your name or any other personal information to access our services as we recognize the importance of respecting your privacy.

In 2017, we will also expand to the Tri-Cities and Abbotsford.

If you have any ideas or know of friends who could use our services outside of these municipalities, please let us know what municipalities we should also go to. We are interested in hearing your ideas!



## West-End Sex Workers' Memorial



On Friday, September 16, at the corner of Jervis and Pendrell Streets, the City of Vancouver unveiled a memorial for sex workers who lived and worked in the West End in the 1970s-1980s. In 1984, these workers were banned from working in their neighbourhood in the City's attempts to reduce public nuisance. The spirit of this memorial affirms the City's ongoing commitment now to develop inclusive, equitable responses to the impacts of sex work that do not infringe on the rights, safety or dignity of any resident or community, including sex workers.

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## There's Safety in Technology

### Women's Self-Defence Workshop



SWAN is considering hosting a free self-defence workshop in February 2017. At the workshop, women can learn practical skills and safety tips on how to avoid and deal with potentially violent or unsafe situations. The instructor will teach women simple techniques that could be used to ward off assaults. The workshop is for all women, including you, your friends, SWAN staff, volunteers and friends. We would love to hear if you are interested in this workshop. Please let our outreach workers know, call/text 778-865-6343, or message us on WeChat (SWANnetreach). We think this will be a fun and informative event!

#### Abuser Alert

One safety tool that you have at your disposal is a tool created by SWAN called the 'Abuser Alert'. The Abuser Alert is a system that collects and shares information about bad clients who don't pay, commit robbery, and/or perpetuate other forms of violence. If you would like to know about bad clients in your area, please text the word "alert" to 778-865-6343 to sign up for alerts. To send us a bad client report, fill out the form at <http://swanvancouver.ca/abuser-alert/>

#### Smart Watch

We have heard of instances when your phones have been stolen at work. While it could be as easy as locking your phone away, having a mode of communication readily available makes your work safer, and is often necessary for your business.

To deal with this conundrum, have you considered using a Smart Watch? A smart watch can make phone calls, and it is always secured to your body, making it much less likely to walk out the door. Not only can a Smart Watch prevent phone theft, it can also help keep you safe when walking alone, especially at night. Women are often told to be aware and not engaged with our phones while walking alone. Directions to destinations can be programmed into the Smart Watch that signals when you need to turn through vibration and the watch is easily accessible in the case of emergencies. Thank you to the woman who mentioned this great safety tip to us!

#### Safety Apps

There are several apps designed for women who are worried about their safety while working alone or meeting online dates. [bSafe](http://getbsafe.com/) is a personal safety app that allows you to share your locations and check in with people whom you trust most. This would be great for outcalls. Features include live GPS tracking in Follow Me Mode, Timer Mode to program an alarm that will trigger if you haven't checked in, Fake Call to receive a phone call when you need an out from your situation, and the Guardian Alert button that will notify your friends if you need help. For more information and to download the app for your smart phone, go to <http://getbsafe.com/>



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## CITY INSPECTORS

City inspectors can only enforce municipal laws. They cannot detain you. They can inspect things related to bylaws (health and safety, licenses, etc.), but they cannot enforce criminal laws or immigration laws. They have no authority to ask about your immigration status. If you break a by law (e.g., you forgot your license, dress code “violation”) they can give you a ticket (fine.)

## POLICE

Your rights depend on your location (e.g. apartment, massage parlour, hotel, car).

If the police come to your residence (e.g. home, apartment, condo) you do not have to let them in unless:

- They have a warrant, or
- The person who answers the door agrees to let them in; or
- The police have reason to believe that:
  - Someone inside is committing, or about to commit, a crime; or
  - Someone they are looking to arrest is inside; or
  - The life or security of the public or an occupant is threatened.

The police have the right to enter a commercial location without a warrant. But this does not mean that they can do whatever they want. They cannot search the premises without a warrant, but local bylaws may allow them to enter for inspection. Bylaws do NOT give the police the power to search you, your bag, your coat, your phone, etc. If you are not under arrest, the police cannot search you without a warrant unless they think you have a weapon and threaten someone’s safety.

## Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)

CBSA usually only come for a particular reason (e.g. looking for someone in particular, “undocumented workers”, “victims of human trafficking”), in which case they may have a warrant.

If you are detained by the CBSA, you have the right to ask to speak with your lawyer. After you identify yourself, you have the right not to say anything more until you speak with your lawyer.

- The officers may or may not respect your right to speak with a lawyer
- There is no actual policy stating that you must cooperate with CBSA, but if you don’t they may become more aggressive and try to pressure you to comply
- To ensure your right to speak with a lawyer, you may want to respond with a “positive statement.” E.g. “Yes, I will cooperate, but I would like to speak with my lawyer first.”
- CBSA officers have the right to question you and ask you the same questions over and over again. They are trained to provoke you to talk (make a statement), and convince you that it is in your best interest. If you decide not to make a statement – stay calm, avoid confrontation, and try not to react to anything they do or say.



Adapted from Stella, Montreal: Working in Canada without Canadian Citizenship:

<http://www.nswp.org/sites/nswp.org/files/Working%20In%20Canada%20Without%20Canadian%20Citizenship,%20Stella%20-%20October%202015.pdf>

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