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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.

## How to Stay Connected with SWAN

Do you have a pressing legal question? Do you need more supplies? Would you like to see a health care provider? There are a variety of ways you can keep in touch with us in between our outreach visits.



You can call or text us at **604-719-6343**. Our office hours are Monday to Friday from 9am-5pm. If you leave a message after hours we will be sure to get back to you as soon as possible.

More comfortable speaking Mandarin or Cantonese? You can call or text **778-865-6343**. There may not always be a Chinese speaker available, but we will ensure when they are, that they respond to you in a timely manner.



Prefer email? Email us at [info@swanvancouver.ca](mailto:info@swanvancouver.ca) or [netreach@swanvancouver.ca](mailto:netreach@swanvancouver.ca), if you prefer correspondence in Chinese.

You can also contact us on our website through our contact forum at [www.swanvancouver.ca](http://www.swanvancouver.ca)

### SWAN is also on social media!

 **Facebook:** "like" us at <https://www.facebook.com/SwanVancouver>

 **Twitter:** "follow" us at [https://twitter.com/SWAN\\_Vancouver](https://twitter.com/SWAN_Vancouver)

 **WeChat:** "add" us at SWANnetreach



### Who's Visiting Your Massage Shop?

#### Community Organizations

##### SWAN (Supporting Women's Alternatives Network) Vancouver

SWAN is a registered non-profit society that provides free, confidential and non-judgmental support and services to newcomer, migrant, and immigrant women who work indoors. Our trained volunteers visit your massage shops about once a month to distribute safer-sex supplies and information resources. We can connect women to healthcare services and answer women's questions about immigration, housing, law, police procedures, employment, safety, and health. We do not have nurses on staff, but we can connect you with one if needed. We are not associated with any Vancouver-based research projects. Learn more about SWAN Vancouver at [www.swanvancouver.ca](http://www.swanvancouver.ca)



##### AESHA (An Evaluation of Sex workers' Health Access)

The AESHA research project is a study of the health, safety and working conditions of women who do sex work in the Metro Vancouver area. AESHA outreach workers invite women to participate in research interviews through outreach where they provide services such as safer-sex supplies and STI screening by a staff nurse. The research collected by AESHA is published in several peer-reviewed papers and is referenced in various policy recommendations. Learn more about AESHA at <http://www.cfenet.ubc.ca/research/aesha>



##### SAFE (Sex Work Awareness For Everyone) Collingwood, Vancouver area only

The SAFE Outreach Team provides confidential support, health and safety kits, and resource information to women working both indoors and outdoors in the Collingwood area (Kingsway). Learn more about SAFE at: <http://safeincollingwood.ca/>



#### Regulatory bodies

##### Police

Police officers have the authority to enforce federal criminal law, as well as municipal by-laws. In Richmond and Burnaby, the police force that may visit your workplace is the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). In Vancouver, it is the Vancouver Police Department (VPD). In Vancouver, the VPD have the [Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines](#) that state "sex work involving consenting adults is not an enforcement priority".



##### Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA) Officers

CBSA officers are responsible for enforcing the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. Simply put, they work to ensure that a person is living and working in Canada legally and with documentation. If they visit, they may ask to view your identification, travel documents, and/or work permits.



##### City Bylaw Enforcement Officers

Bylaw enforcement officers enforce and monitor city bylaws through workplace inspections and by handing out fines if bylaws are not being followed. These bylaws differ from city to city. If you would like to know more about the bylaws in your municipality, you can call, text, or email SWAN Vancouver at 604-719-6343 or [info@swanvancouver.ca](mailto:info@swanvancouver.ca)



*If you have issues with police, CBSA and/or city by-law officers or if you feel you have been treated unfairly, SWAN can advocate on your behalf.*



*Advocacy can include: advising you on how to make an official complaint, writing a letter to make an informal complaint (signed by either you or SWAN), or requesting an in-person meeting to discuss the issue with the relevant regulatory body.*



**Have you or someone else you know experienced victimization, but you do not want to report it to the police?**



Crimestoppers is an alternative option for reporting a crime. You never have to identify yourself or testify in court and you could receive a cash reward for your information if it leads to an arrest.

You can leave an anonymous tip by calling **1-800-222-8477**.

To submit information in other languages (including Mandarin and Cantonese), you can call this number and ask the operator to make a tip in the language of your choice. They will arrange a translation service for you.

You can also report through text to CRIMES (274637), on the Crimestoppers website at [www.solvecrime.ca](http://www.solvecrime.ca), or through the Crimestoppers Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/MetroVancouverCrimeStoppers](http://www.facebook.com/MetroVancouverCrimeStoppers)

## Working Safe: Robberies

We asked some of you for some tips on staying safe and preventing robberies in your workplace. Here are some of the tips you provided:

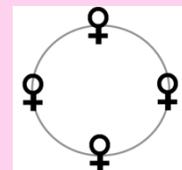


- Always take the payment at the start of the session, count it, and put it away in a safe spot, preferably in another room or locked compartment. Make sure the client does not see where you are putting it. Do this even with regular clients as they are most likely to short you or steal back money because you may be more relaxed with them.
- Scatter your money in different hiding spots in your workplace so that if someone tries to take it they would not get all of it. Make it a habit to take your money to the bank or to a safe spot multiple times a week.
- Always make a safe call or let someone in your workplace know you are seeing a client. Even if you have to pretend, the client will think that you have security.
- Never keep anything expensive, personal or with identifying information in the areas that clients can access (e.g. no medications with your name, no photos of your family)
- Always safeguard your phone. Though it is a good idea to have handy in cases of emergencies, it is also the easiest thing to steal.
- Don't leave a client unattended in a room for too long.
- Never say you are alone. If a client asks, use phrases like, "not to worry, we will have privacy."
- Avoid booking or seeing clients that are under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs as they can be unpredictable.
- If you have a bad feeling about or encounter a dangerous client, giving their money back and refusing them service may be the best way to keep you and your belongings safe. Put your safety before money.
- If - even despite your best efforts to prevent one - a robbery does occur, remain calm and talk to the person nicely, but assertively. Remind the client that he is on camera. After an argument, ensure the person has left your workplace.

### SWAN is working on a new system of information-sharing and reporting of victimization:

SWAN is calling it the "Abuser Alert". We will have a form available in print and on our website where you can inform SWAN of any instances of violence and/or victimization you may experience while working. By filling out this form, SWAN can keep track and monitor any potential abusive situations that women working indoors in Vancouver and the surrounding areas experience. With your consent and complete anonymity, parts of the report are provided to other sex workers to help keep everyone safer.

We acknowledge that many women have informal networks for sharing information about negative work experiences. This form of information sharing is only meant to complement these already existing networks and provide a platform for those that might not have access to these informal networks.



We are still developing this new system. We will inform you when it is ready for use. In the meantime, if you have any suggestions about what you would like to see in the Abuser Alert, you can call us at 604-719-6343 or email at [info@swanvancouver.ca](mailto:info@swanvancouver.ca)



## Frequently Ask Questions: Pap Tests

### What Is a Pap Test and Why Should I Get One?

A pap test is a procedure that removes a small sample of cells from the cervix so that they can be examined to screen for abnormal cells that can lead to cervical and other reproductive cancers. Pelvic examinations are often done at the same time and can help diagnose infection and inflammation in the lower female reproductive tract.



### Who Should Have a Pap Test?

- Women aged 21 and over who are sexually active should a pap test every 1-3 years. Talk to your doctor or nurse practitioner about how often they recommend you to have a pap test.
- Women who may not be having regular sex should continue to have regular pap tests.

### How Do I Prepare for a Pap Test?

- Avoid having the test during menstruation as it may make it difficult for the results to be interpreted
- For best results, the test should be done in the middle of a woman's cycle (10-12 days after the first day of menstruation)
- Avoid having sexual intercourse for 24 hours before the test
- Do not use a vaginal douche, vaginal medications or contraceptive creams, foams or gels for 48 hours before the test as these products can wash away or hide abnormal cells.



### How Is a Pap Test Done?

The test only takes a few minutes. There may be some discomfort, pressure, or cramping during the procedure, but it is usually not painful.

An instrument called speculum is gently put into the vagina to widen it so that the cervix can be seen. A small wooden stick for the lower part of the cervix, and a special brush for the upper part of the cervix is used to pick up cells. The cell sample is sent to the laboratory to be examined. It can take anywhere from 2-8 weeks for results.

If you would like to get a pap test, we can connect you with a nurse practitioner. Call, text or email for more details.



Source: <http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/diagnosis-and-treatment/tests-and-procedures/pap-test/?region=on>

### Interested in seeing a health care provider?

One woman comments on her positive experience at the Vancouver Women's Health Collective (VWHC) after being referred by SWAN:

*"I was referred to the VWHC by SWAN Vancouver and I would recommend the VWHC to any working girl. The establishment was clean and modern, I didn't feel uncomfortable there and I love that it's women only collective. My nurse (April) was beyond amazing. She answered all my sex health questions, and I felt comfortable telling her my line of work. She was very helpful and understanding. I felt no bad judgment from my nurse and she was very attentive and sent me follow up emails. I will definitely be going to the VWHC for all my sex health needs and further questions."*

To make an appointment with the VWHC, call 604-736-5262. They are located at 29 W. Hastings St. Vancouver.

If you would like us to make an appointment for you, or you would like accompaniment and/or translation, please call, text or email us.



**Supporting Women's Alternatives Network of Vancouver**

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