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Announcements and Updates

Vancouver Police releases Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines Video

The VPD has released a new video, [Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines](#) to communicate to sex workers, the public and VPD officers that the VPD's focus is safety, respect, and building relationships with sex workers, and to reiterate that "sex work involving consenting adults is not an enforcement priority". You can watch the video on [YouTube](#), or visit our legal page at <http://swanvancouver.ca/legal/>. The VPD have committed to releasing a Chinese version of the video in 2016.



What is the 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 the SWANzine, please send us your questions or comments.

Provincial Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines

New Provincial Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines are to be released in late spring. The provincial government is currently working on the consultative stage of the process. These enforcement guidelines will shape how sex workers are treated by authorities across British Columbia. They are based on the VPD Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines above.

Abuser Alert Update

Thank you to all the women who have subscribed to our Abuser Alert system, and who have sent us reports of bad clients. We continue to receive and forward reports of non-payment, robberies and other incidents. 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/>.

SWAN Staff – About Us

Do you ever wonder who SWAN is? Here are some fun and interesting facts about our staff so you can get to know us a little better. We will introduce some of our volunteers in the next SWANzine.

Kim is the Outreach Coordinator who helps organize the volunteers for our monthly visits. She is also a student studying policy and wishes she could just be a full-time traveler. On the weekends you will probably find her hiking on the local mountains or kicking around a soccer ball. She can't wait to be the proud owner of a rescue puppy when she 'grows up', so if you have any dogs, she would love to see pictures!

Jane is Outreach Staff and connects with women in massage shops as well as in apartments. Outside of SWAN, she loves to go to the gym, ride her bike, cook meals at home, and try out new restaurants. She loves good food, so feel free to share with her your favourite restaurants and recipes! Currently, she is also busy with school and planning a wedding.



Angela is Outreach Staff and connects with women in massage shops as well as in apartments. She is also a student studying politics, and likes to watch TV shows in her spare time; her favourites are comedies and sitcoms. She also loves cats and recently got a kitten. If you have any cats, feel free to share photos with her!

Alison is the Executive Director which means she is usually in the office. Sometimes however she does outreach or may drop supplies off at your workplace. She may look different every time you see her as she changes her hairstyle and hair color a lot. In her free time, she rides a motorcycle and is always busy planning her next adventure. If you know nice of a nice place to drive in BC or beyond, be sure to let Alison know.



PIVOT Legal Society 'Know Your Rights' Card

You may have received PIVOT Legal Society cards in your outreach bags that provide you with information regarding Canada's sex work laws and sex workers' rights.



These cards summarize the laws in a concise, easy-to-read pocket card. While these cards do not constitute legal advice, it is useful to understand the law and how it affects you.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns, or would like to receive a card.

CANADA'S SEX WORK LAWS

Selling your own "sexual services" is legal,
but most of the activities that would allow you
to do it safely are not.

Sex Work and the Law

Stella, a sex worker support organization in Montreal, recently published two information sheets about immigration status and sex work and how different laws affect you. To see the information sheets in their entirety, please visit our website's Legal Page www.swanvancouver.ca/legal/

There are different types of laws that regulate sex work:

- Criminal law
- Immigration law
- Municipal law

These laws are enforced by different kinds of law enforcement officers:

- Municipal law enforcement, e.g. City hall
 - o City inspectors can only enforce municipal laws. They cannot detain you. They inspect things related to business licenses and bylaws, not criminal or immigration laws. They cannot ask you about your immigration status. If you break a bylaw, you may get a ticket (fine).
- Police, e.g. Vancouver Police Department, RCMP
 - o Police can enforce municipal and criminal laws. The police can detain you if you are committing a crime, if there is a warrant in your name (related to criminal charge or an immigration removal order), or if you are a witness to a crime.
- Immigration officers, e.g. Canada Border Services Agency
 - o They can detain you if they believe that you do not have legal immigration status, if you are breaking an immigration law, if you are inadmissible to Canada because of your criminal record or for other security reasons, if there is an immigration-related removal or deportation order for you, or if they cannot identify you.

Your rights depend on where you are.

- 1) If the police come to your shop:
 - They have the right to enter without a warrant, but it doesn't mean they can do whatever they want.
 - The police cannot search the shop without a warrant, but local bylaws may allow them to enter for safety inspection.
 - Police cannot search you or your belongings if you are not under arrest, unless they suspect you have a weapon or are a threat to someone's safety.
- 2) If the police come to your home:
 - You do not have to let them in, unless
 - o They have a warrant, or
 - o The person who answers the door agrees to let them in, or
 - o The police have a reason to believe that someone inside is committing a crime or about to commit a crime, or someone they want to arrest is inside, or the life and security of someone is threatened.

The information sheets include a lot of useful information such as interacting with police at work, losing your status, removal and deportation orders, etc. If you have questions, SWAN staff are more than happy to answer your questions at 604 719 6343.



Your Rights

For many years, community organizations, sex workers and allies have worked to make Vancouver a safer place for both street-based workers and those who work indoors in massage shops and condos. SWAN has been involved in this work for over ten years that has resulted in some successful changes that have hopefully made it safer and easier for you to work. Here are some examples of SWAN's work:

- Advised VPD in the VPD's Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines video that explains the VPD's focus on safety, respect and building relationships, and not penalizing women who do sex work or confiscating condoms.
- Successfully advocated having a Chinese version of the video made so that the VPD can communicate the changes they are making to improve your safety on the job and address your concerns if you make a police report.
- Worked hard to ensure that the City of Vancouver's bylaws do not create barriers to working safely, and that bylaws officers treat sex workers with respect.

These are just a few examples of the successes SWAN has contributed to in changing policy that positively affects your work. SWAN is working hard affect change in Burnaby and Richmond as well.

It is through this advocacy that SWAN can help to address any concerns you have about your work. If you have been treated unfairly by police, bylaws officers, health care providers or anyone else in the community, we would like to hear from you so that we can make sure your concerns are represented in the work happening at the policy level in the Lower Mainland. SWAN never discloses your identity but your experiences can demonstrate the broader context of safety issues in Metro Vancouver. We want you to know that we are able to advocate on your behalf if you ever experience injustices in the workplace or in the community.



[Safety Page on swanvancouver.ca](#)

Did you know we have a safety page on our website? It's under the **Resources** tab. It includes tips on screening clients, dealing with bad dates, receiving payment, working with other people and in-calls/out-calls. Most of these tips are written by sex workers for sex workers.



There is also information for victims of violence. If you are a victim of violence, SWAN can help you review your options. If you do not wish to report to police, SWAN can inform you of community supports and services available to you. If you are considering reporting to the police, we can help you with your decision and if you decide to report, we can accompany you to make a report.



Supporting Women's Alternatives Network of Vancouver

Phone: (604)719-6343 (English) (778)865-6343 (Mandarin, Cantonese)

Email: info@swanvancouver.ca | Website: www.swanvancouver.ca

Mail: P.O. 21520 1424 Commercial Drive Vancouver, BC V5L 5G2



SWAN's Advocacy in the Community

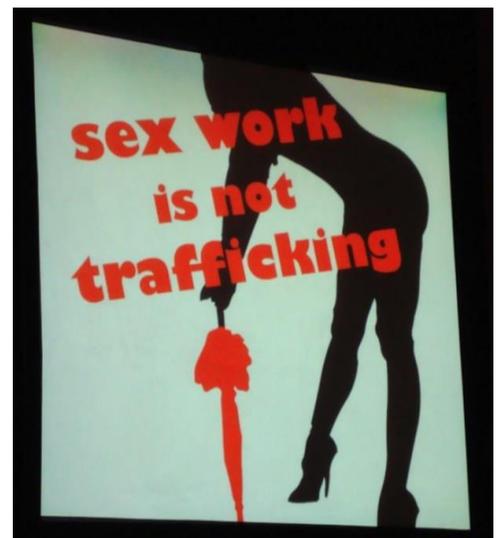
If you visit our website, you will see that we do more than drop off supplies and connect you to nurses. One of the areas that we focus on is advocacy work in the community. Nowadays sex work is increasingly confused with human trafficking and this may have direct or indirect consequences for your work. This confusion between consensual work and exploitation or trafficking may impact the way police and other service providers treat you.

Often when police visit your workplace, they do not tell you why. It is possible they are visiting because they are being influenced by the misinformation that exists in the community, government and the media about human trafficking and your work. Sometimes they may ask you, "are you forced?" These questions come from misunderstandings about your work. The government and police do not always understand the difference between consensual work and victimization in this industry. As a result, they put a lot of money into combating human trafficking, which is why the police may visit your workplace.

You tell us that you just want to work without being harassed by law enforcement, so an important part of our work is making sure that law enforcement understands the difference between sex work and trafficking.

Misunderstandings and misinformation are growing and impacting not just your work, but what support services are funded. This has negative impacts for SWAN because we do not encounter victims of human trafficking in our work; therefore we do not get much money to do our work. We think it is important to let the government, law enforcement and the community know the harms of assuming women who work in this industry are forced, exploited, or trafficked. If they come to better understand your work, then we hope that you will no longer have to deal with police visits and questions about your decision-making.

We want to hear what you think about this advocacy work, and we would love to have you involved in this advocacy work. We think one of the strongest ways of combating the confusion between sex work and trafficking is to have stories from you about how this misinformation is affecting you and your work through things like police visits, judgmental attitudes and potential barriers to services. Please let us know if this is something you would like to be a part of!





GETCHECKED ONLINE

New Online Service Available for STI Testing

GetCheckedOnline is a free and confidential online sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing service provided by the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC). You do not have to see a health care provider. You simply print a lab form online, go to the lab to give your samples, and receive your results online or over the phone. The steps are as follows:

1. **Create an account** on <https://getcheckedonline.com/>. You will need a promotional code to create an account. To get a promotional code, please ask our SWAN volunteers, or contact us at 604-719-6343 or info@swanvancouver.ca. You will then be asked to provide some personal information but you do not have to use your real name and date of birth. However you do have to give a real email address to receive your results. You can create a new email for this purpose if you feel more comfortable doing so.
2. **Create a lab form.** This involves completing a sexual history questionnaire to find out what tests are recommended for you. Read the consent to testing page and print out your lab form.
3. **Give samples at a lab.** You can take your lab form to a [participating LifeLabs location](#) (Vancouver only for now) where you will be asked to give a blood and/or urine sample, and you may be given a swab kit to take home. At the lab you will not need to show your ID or MSP card.
4. **Get your test results.** You will receive an email from GetCheckedOnline when your results are ready. If your results are positive or inconclusive, a nurse will contact you about treatment or retesting.

Please note that this service currently only tests for HIV, chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis and Hepatitis C. We suggest that GetCheckedOnline should only be used for regular preventive check-ups. If you are experiencing symptoms, it is best to go to a health care provider. To access the service or find out more, visit <https://getcheckedonline.com/>.

HEALTH CLINICS

VANCOUVER

Women's Health Collective

BC Women's Nurse
Practitioners 29 West Hastings
604-736-5262 All ages. Women only. *Check-ups *Diagnosis and prescriptions *Specialist referrals *Birth control *Pap tests *STI & HIV testing.
Monday 9:30am-4:30pm
Tuesday-Thursday 1:00p,-4:30pm Friday 9:30am-1:30pm.
Free services. Will not share results with family doctor if requested.

BCCDC Clinic Drop-in Clinic

1170 Bute St. 11-6:30 Mon-Fri.
All ages. Offers: *STI & HIV testing *Birth control *Hepatitis B vaccine. Free and confidential. No MSP required.

BURNABY

Options for Sexual Health Clinic
4734 Imperial 604-731-4252
All ages. Offers: *Birth control *pregnancy testing and options *STI & HIV testing. Wednesdays 7pm-9pm

RICHMOND

Youth Clinic 8100 Granville 604-233-3204. 21 and under. *STI & HIV testing *Birth control *Morning after pill free for all ages. Monday & Wednesday 3:30pm-5:30pm, Friday 1pm-4pm

For clinics in other municipalities, check SWAN's Health Page on our website. Click "Resources" and select the health section from the drop down menu options.

