



The Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline

The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking (The Centre) is developing the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline, with a targeted launch of May 2019. This dedicated and expert hotline will accept calls about all forms of human trafficking, including **both sex and labour trafficking**, and provide assistance to and on behalf of minors, adults, citizens, permanent residents, and foreign nationals.

In the February 2018 federal budget, the Government of Canada identified the development of a national human trafficking hotline as a priority for the Department of Public Safety. Since mid-2017, The Centre has been working with assistance from Polaris, the U.S.-based trafficking hotline expert, to design, develop, and implement Canada's first anti-trafficking hotline.

The hotline will use a **victim-centered approach** to connect human trafficking victims and survivors with local emergency, transition, and/or long-term supports and services across the country, as well as municipal, provincial and/or federal law enforcement, as appropriate. Overall, the hotline will **act as a central mechanism** for referrals, offering 24/7, multilingual, confidential access to services across Canada.

As such, the hotline will provide a crucial **alternative point of access for victims** and survivors, as well as anonymous callers with third party tips. Independent of government and law enforcement, the hotline will increase callers' options for support, thereby broadening the safety net available to them. *The hotline is not intended to detract or deter individuals from calling law enforcement directly if they wish.*

Building Collaborative Relationships

The hotline is not an investigative organization and does not seek to encroach upon, interfere with, or supplant the responsibility or authority of any Canadian or foreign law enforcement body.

The hotline is focused on working with law enforcement and front-line service providers in communities across Canada and **developing localized Referral and Reporting Protocols** with these partners to ensure a robust, immediate response to all callers. In doing so, the hotline also aims to facilitate collaboration among agencies across Canada, including law enforcement, at the municipal, provincial, and national level.

The hotline will make referrals from an internal, **comprehensive database** of:

- direct and indirect service NGOs
- law enforcement agencies
- government departments and agencies
- coalitions, networks, and allied organizations

While some of the above organizations work predominantly on human trafficking issues, others may work in allied service areas such as sexual assault, runaway and homeless youth, domestic violence, labour rights, healthcare, and immigration and refugee services.

Purpose of Referral and Reporting Protocols

The localized Referral and Reporting Protocols will reflect the unique requirements of law enforcement agencies and incorporate their respective judgments regarding capacity, jurisdiction, and other relevant issues. In building protocols, the role of the hotline is focused on establishing a thorough communications reporting path for incidents; it is not a comment or judgment about jurisdiction.

For cases reported to law enforcement by the hotline, a customised Referral and Reporting Protocol is the foundation of collaborative communications and will:

1. Serve as an **integrated and detailed contact list** of all law enforcement personnel in a given jurisdiction relevant to human trafficking interventions and/or investigations who will receive communications from the hotline, as well as a limited number of social service providers for crisis circumstances.
2. Provide **response transparency**, thereby reducing the probability of uncoordinated intervention and/or investigation activity for cases reported by the hotline.
3. Be an ongoing, updated **reference document** that accurately reflects who is actively responsible on human trafficking cases in the jurisdiction for cases reported by the hotline.

Reporting to Law Enforcement

The hotline's operations may increase the number of human trafficking cases and/or tips referred to law enforcement. Consequently, each call to the hotline will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure appropriate referrals are made while **prioritizing the safety and consent** of individuals.

The following overview of **reporting considerations** is non-exhaustive due to the complexity and unique circumstances of individuals calling the hotline. These principal considerations will be applied to all potential cases of human trafficking and take into account:

- the urgency of the situation in terms of potential for imminent harm to the caller or others
- status as a minor, if known
- relevant federal, provincial, and/or territorial laws
- the unique needs and wishes of the caller, if known
- the presence of indicators of human trafficking
- the level of detail and reportable information
- the Referral and Reporting Protocols in place in any given jurisdiction

About the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking

The Centre is the only national charity solely focusing its efforts on eradicating human trafficking in Canada. The Centre coordinates and works together with stakeholders dedicated to ending human trafficking and advancing best practices. The Centre's strategic priorities focus on: public education and awareness; research and data collection; knowledge sharing; and policy development and advocacy.