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## **TDLR Helps Fight Human Trafficking In Its Regulated Professions**

**AUSTIN** – January is Human Trafficking Prevention Month, and TDLR employees are firmly part of the fight against coerced labor or commercial sex acts.

Several of the regulated programs for the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation can have a nexus with potential human trafficking, and TDLR employees and licensees work together to identify and eliminate human trafficking in those programs.

Because TDLR regulates massage therapists, massage establishments, cosmetologists, nail salons, and many other professions where trafficking may be present, TDLR employees and licensees can be the first ally in contact with potential human trafficking victims.

- Our health professions licensees may interact with trafficked persons if they are brought in for medical assistance.
- Our beauty licensees may interact with trafficked persons if their traffickers want to alter or control the appearance of the individual to make them more attractive to potential clients.

TDLR conducts periodic, unannounced inspections of massage establishments and cosmetology salons and aggressively pursues administrative penalties for both licensed and unlicensed service providers found to allow sexual activity on business premises.

All TDLR employees who routinely interact with licensees receive training on how to recognize and respond to human trafficking situations. Agency employees work with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies, as well as non-governmental agencies, to investigate suspected illicit massage businesses and possible human trafficking at nail salons.

As part of the department's fight against human trafficking in Texas, TDLR issued fifty-one (51) emergency orders that ultimately permanently revoked the licenses of sixty-three (63) Texas massage establishments

suspected of human trafficking during the first two years of [HB 3579](#), which was passed in the 88<sup>th</sup> Legislature Regular Session.

Before they can renew their licenses, many TDLR licensees are required to complete an approved human trafficking prevention training course on how to spot human trafficking:

- 400,000 cosmetologists and barbers
- More than 83,000 health professions practitioners including massage therapists, athletic trainers, audiologists, behavior analysts, dietitians, dyslexia therapists, hearing instrument fitters and dispensers, midwives, orthotists, prosthetists, podiatrists and speech-language pathologists

Anyone who suspects human trafficking is occurring can contact the National Hotline for Human Trafficking at [1-888-373-7888](tel:1-888-373-7888) or text HELP or INFO to BeFree (233733). If the situation is an emergency or you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 911 and alert the authorities.

Anyone who suspects human trafficking in a TDLR-regulated business can also [file a complaint](#) with TDLR.

#### About TDLR

*TDLR provides regulatory oversight for a broad range of occupations, businesses, facilities, and equipment in Texas, including the Texas Lottery and Charitable Bingo programs. The agency protects the health and safety of Texans by ensuring they are served by qualified, licensed professionals. Inspections of individuals, businesses, and equipment are done on a regular basis to safeguard the public. Currently, the agency regulates 41 business and occupational licensing programs with more than 1,000,000 licensees across the state.*

*Visit TDLR's [website](#) for more information and resources. You can search the [TDLR licensee database](#), and also find [past violations](#) in which a final order was issued against companies or individuals. TDLR's Customer Service line is available anytime between 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 1-800-803-9202. TDLR representatives are fluent in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.*

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