



Lincoln Police Department

Standard Operating Procedures

Integrity, Competency, Fairness



Subject:	Anti- Sex Trafficking & Commercial Sexual Exploitation	Policy #	O-70
Effective Date:	September 16, 2025	Review Cycle:	2 Years
Distribution:	All Sworn Personnel	# of pages:	3
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	<i>Rescinds All Previous Policies Related to This Current Policy</i>	MCJA Mandatory Policy	
Issuing Authority:	Chief of Police Lee Miller		

I. POLICY:

It is the policy of the Lincoln Police Department to identify and respond effectively to incidents involving sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. The agency is committed to ensuring that all individuals who are, or may be, victims are treated with dignity and respect and are provided with access to appropriate services as required by law. Officers will prioritize victim safety, actively pursue perpetrators, and collaborate with relevant agencies to support both investigative efforts and victim services.

All officers are required to follow this policy and comply with applicable standards established by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy Board of Trustees. Any deviation from this policy may result in administrative review and action by the Board. ***BOT 17-5***

II. PURPOSE:

To establish clear guidelines for identifying, responding to, and supporting individuals who are victims of human trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation in accordance with Title 17-A M.R.S. §852 - 855.

III. DEFINITIONS: ***BOT 17-1***

Commercial Sexual Exploitation: The abuse of a position of vulnerability or power imbalance for sexual purposes, including but not limited to the exchange of sex for money, drugs, shelter, or other goods, especially when involving a minor. *Note: Under Maine law, any commercial sex act involving a minor is trafficking/exploitation, regardless of coercion or consent.*

Sex Trafficking: The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for a commercial sex act, where such act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or where the person induced to perform such act is under 18 years of age.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Officer Awareness and Indicators ***BOT 17-2***

1. Officers may encounter potential victims of sex trafficking and/or commercial sexual exploitation during their duties, during domestic violence calls, when responding to incidents at massage parlors, bars, and strip clubs, or even during routine traffic stops.
2. All officers shall be trained to recognize behavioral and situational indicators that may suggest sex trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation, including but not limited to:
 - i. A minor engaging in commercial sex acts or appearing to be under the control of another person.
 - ii. Presence of coercion, threats, or signs of physical abuse.
 - iii. Display of fearful, timid, or submissive behavior.
 - iv. Lack of personal identification or control over personal documents.
 - v. Inconsistencies in stories, fearfulness, or inability to speak freely.
 - vi. Appears to have been denied food, water, sleep, or medical care.
 - vii. Involvement with older adults at hotels/motels, on the street, or during internet-based activities.
 - viii. Appears to have been coached on what to say to law enforcement.
3. Officers should also be aware of traffickers. They can come from any background, age group, or gender. Their victims may describe them as employers, co-workers, romantic partners, "pimps," family members, friends, or a mutual connection.
4. If human trafficking is suspected, the officer is in a unique position to intervene. Knowing the agency's policies and state and federal law is vital for the victim's safety.
5. When safe and appropriate, efforts should be made to separate victims from exploiters and provide a secure environment for interviews or support.

B. Investigative Procedures *BOT 17-3*

1. Officers encountering a situation suggestive of sex trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation shall ensure the immediate safety of the individual and notify a supervisor.
2. Investigations shall be conducted by or in consultation with trained personnel and may include:
 - i. Interviews conducted in a trauma-informed, victim-centered manner prioritize the victim's needs and interests. When encountering a potential victim, it is essential to remember that they may not be comfortable coming forward or working with law enforcement. They may:
 - a. Possess initial fear, distrust, or resentment of law enforcement.
 - b. Not identify as a victim.
 - c. Not tell a complete story, become defensive, or use rehearsed or misleading responses.
 - d. Identify with the trafficker or express romantic feelings or loyalty to them due to the trafficker's level of control.
 - e. Fear judgment, consequences, and harm from law enforcement.
 - ii. Collection of physical and digital evidence.

- iii. Coordination with local, county, state, and federal agencies, including:
 - a. Maine State Police
 - b. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
 - c. Federal Bureau of Investigation
 - d. Department of Homeland Security
 - e. Local Human Trafficking Task Force
 - f. District Attorney's Office
 - g. Victim-Witness Advocates
3. Officers shall document all observations, interviews, and evidence in accordance with department protocols.

C. Victim Safety and Referral *BOT 17-4*

1. Officers shall treat individuals believed to be victims of sex trafficking or CSE as victims of crime, not as offenders.
2. Victims shall be provided with immediate access to medical care, shelter, and advocacy services as appropriate.
3. Officers shall notify or coordinate with social service agencies such as:
 - i. Local crisis centers or sexual assault response services.
 - ii. DHHS Child and Family Services (for minor victims).
 - iii. National Human Trafficking Hotline or other specialized resources.