

5th Edition
A Sex Worker Handbook
XXX
GUIDE

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PREFACE

The *XXX Guide* was created by and for women who work in the sex trade with the support of Stella. Stella is a community group dedicated to improving the lives and working conditions of women sex workers (and those who identify themselves as women when working).

The *XXX Guide* deals with different aspects of your work and offers suggestions and references for living and working with dignity in a healthy and safe environment. It addresses numerous subjects: negotiating a contract or services, safer sex, relations with clients, the law, your rights, managing stress and dealing with society's institutions. The contents focus mainly on the reality of female prostitutes who have male clients. If you work at another job in the sex trade, or you are transsexual or transvestite, you will still find that it contains lots of important information.

The advice in this guide does not attempt to influence anyone to commit illegal acts or acts that could harm their health. The *XXX Guide* aims to improve your control over your work.

Thanks to all those who participated, in whatever way, in creating The *XXX Guide*.

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INTRODUCTION

The XXX Guide is for you. It is about your work, your health, your security, your dignity. This handbook is intended to give you a helping hand with your work because you have the same right to security, health and dignity as any worker, although this often does not appear to be true.

There are many widely held myths about sex work and the women who do it. For example, there is a social myth that you offer sexual services because you are addicted to drugs, uneducated, a nymphomaniac and/or a victim of sexual abuse. This popular belief does not necessarily correspond to your reality. Offering sexual services is your own business. You can voluntarily, while in full control of your life, decide to work in the sex trades. However, it is a fact that Canadian prostitution laws and municipal by-laws affect your working conditions.

As a prostitute, escort, masseuse, dancer, porn actress or dominatrix, one day you may, depending on the circumstances, have problems with the justice system. Prostitution laws and certain municipal by-laws are used to control sex work. Furthermore, if you live and work with HIV, you should be aware that under Canadian law you are obligated to disclose that you are seropositive before engaging in any high-risk sexual activity. Anal and vaginal penetration even fellatio without using a condom can be considered high-risk sexual activities.

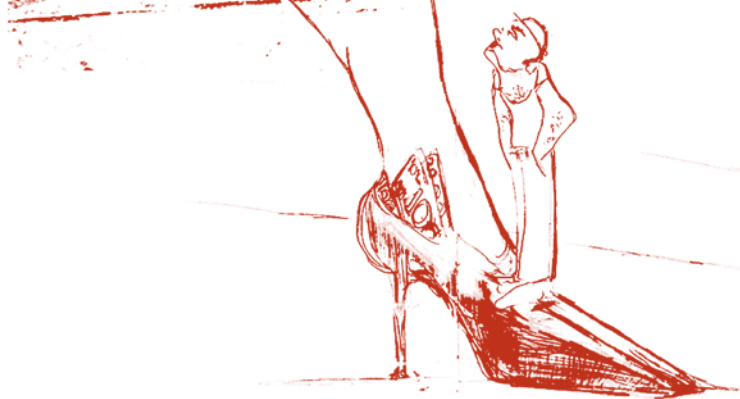
It is legal for adults to exchange sexual services for money but the majority of activities surrounding this industry are illegal. For example, you can not solicit a client by offering him your services nor can you be found in what could be considered a brothel or a “bawdy house.” If you break the law, you can have problems with the justice system and, possibly, you might end up with a criminal record. This quasi-legal status of your work, combined with harassment and discrimination, can lead you to work in dangerous circumstances: working in out-of-the-way, dark or unfamiliar places, at the mercy of your clients, or accepting to work in unhealthy or filthy conditions because you think there’s nothing you can do to improve the situation. Stella has published this practical guide containing answers to some of your questions and vital information relating to your work.





1. BEING IN CONTROL

You can be self-employed or work for someone else, an employer. Either of these arrangements will influence the way you work as well as your working conditions. In the following section, you will find useful advice for negotiating with your clients as well as with your employers. In addition, there is a series of questions that you may want to ask yourself when you are doing sex work.



Even the sex worker who is most concerned about her health, her security and her dignity can't always escape the stress related to her work. Myths, common misconceptions, plus police and local resident harassment of sex workers, on top of your daily preoccupations, can be hard to deal with. If you have problems, the information in The XXX Guide may not be enough. We recommend that you consult others who work in the sex trades, or call Stella. This chapter offers advice for maintaining control over your work situation and for having more self-confidence.

Be confident

Present yourself as if you are the best person for the job. Be firm and don't compromise your integrity to meet the employer's demands. Don't get discouraged and don't agree to do anything out of fear of not finding work. There are many clubs and agencies in town. You'll find something that suits you.

Be clear

After you've been hired, it becomes more difficult to negotiate your working conditions. From the start, be clear about what you accept and what you refuse to do. Don't be afraid to insist that all your clients wear a condom and to be paid for all the clients that you meet: the employer's friends and business associates are also clients.

Be firm

If your employer does not respect the terms of your agreement, you might be better off to quit right away, before the situation degenerates to the point where your health or your security could be at risk. The chances are slim that it will be possible to maintain a respectful relationship in such a working environment. Remember, your limits deserve to be respected.

1.1 WORKING CONDITIONS

There are many things to control in order to work in the best possible conditions. Ask the women who are already working there; they can provide you with very important information that you aren't likely to get from the employer.

Accessories

Verify whether the employer supplies the accessories you will need for your work: condoms, vibrators or other sex toys, towels, massage oil, lubricant, etc. However, if the vibrators and other toys are supplied, be sure to clean them and always use them with a condom. Better yet, ask to be responsible for cleaning them. This way you will always be in control of what comes into contact with your body orifices.

Fines

Ask if there is a system of penalties for lateness or for refusing a client who appears to you to be unappealing, dangerous or whom you simply don't want to service.

Advertisements

Check that the ad is not misleading and that it corresponds to the services you are willing to offer. An incorrect advertisement can be the source of misunderstanding with the employer or with clients and can also lead to legal problems.

Dress

Ask what you are expected to wear when working. That way, you will know how to dress for the first day and you can evaluate whether your wardrobe will meet the requirements of your new job.

Menstruation

Verify with the employer if you're required to work on days when you are having your period.

Working hours

Certain times are better paying than others. Ask to know the minimum number of hours per day and the minimum number of days per week that you have to work. In addition, ask about the flexibility of working hours and ask about sick days.

Revenue, pay, and taxes

The good management of your money and your pay is important for many reasons. Sometimes we are under the impression that we are making a lot of money. But when we count our working expenses like taxis, restaurants, beauty products, tips... we can have unpleasant surprises. Sex workers are not always paid in a conventional way. Without giving your name or the details, you can call the Labour Standards Commission and the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency and ask questions. Even if you work without a contract you can declare your revenue to the government. Some sex workers are doing it and they find many advantages. Get the information and you will be able to decide what is best for you.

Hygiene and cleanliness

Ask to see the place where you will be working. Sometimes appearances can be misleading: the place could be dirty or badly heated. Checking first could save you from making disappointing discoveries later on.



1.2 SERVICES

Find out what services the employer offers to clients. Right from the interview you should establish your limits concerning what you will and what you will not do. Establish these limits even if you are working on your own. Some of these services involve a high level of risk to your health. Use of a condom is recommended at all times. Here is a list of the most common services:

Anal sex, Greek-style, sodomy

Penetration in the anus with a penis or a dildo. Use of a condom is recommended at all times.

Analingus, rimming

Exciting the anus with the tongue and mouth. For protection against infection, use a dental dam.

BBBJ, bareback blow-job

Sucking the client without a condom. Not recommended.

Contact dance, \$10 dance

An erotic dance in private where the client is allowed to touch the dancer's breasts and the butt.

Cunnilingus, dining at the Y

Exciting the woman's vulva with the tongue and mouth. Eating. For protection against infections, use a dental dam or a female condom.

Double

Two workers offer services to one or two clients at the same time.

Erotic conversation, dirty talk

Sex talk with a client, in person, on the phone or on the Internet.

Erotic couple

Two workers who perform sexual acts together.

Erotic dance, striptease

A sensual dance. Becomes a striptease when the worker strips while dancing. The amount of contact with the client can vary and this is to be negotiated in advance.

Facial

Ejaculation in the worker's face.

Fantasy

Mental image or sexual scenario that has the power to sexually excite.

Fetish

Object or non-sexual body part that has the power to sexually excite. Examples: leather, feet or clothing of the opposite sex.

Fingering, fisting

Using your fingers to caress and penetrate the vagina or the anus. We call it "fisting" when the entire hand or several fingers are used for penetration. To prevent infections, it is recommended that latex gloves always be used.

From behind, doggy-style

Vaginal or anal penetration from behind.

Full service

Service with vaginal penetration.

Golden shower

Urinating on someone.

In call

The worker receives the client at home, a place managed by an agency, or a massage parlour.

Massage with options

Body massage. The options go from nudity to sexual services. These options vary according to the rules of the establishment and the worker's limits.

Masturbation, jerking off, hand job

Exciting the penis or the clitoris with the hand, other parts of the body, a vibrator or a dildo.

Oral sex, blow job, fellatio

Exciting the penis with the mouth. Sucking.

Out call

The worker visits the client at his home or in a hotel or they go out together.

Peep show, erotic show

Erotic dance and masturbation show with or without sex toys (vibrators, dildos).

Role playing

Sexually exciting scenario where the worker and the client play roles in relation to one another. Example: the professor and the naïve student, the baby in diapers and his mother, etc.

Sadomasochistic services

Domination: humiliating, tying up, whipping, or inflicting physical or psychological pain on a client with the objective of exciting him sexually.

Submission: The client gets sexually excited by humiliating, tying up, whipping or inflicting pain on the worker. Caution: Being tied up makes it much harder for the worker to protect herself against physical and sexual assault.

Scatology, brown sugar, brownies

Erotic games involving feces.

Threesome

This is typically a couple with a sex worker.

Tit fucking

Masturbation of the penis between the breasts. Often finishes with a "pearl necklace" sperm on the neck.



1.3 ABOUT SAFETY

Your work involves certain dangers. The myths and the laws concerning sex work encourage some people to believe that harassing or assaulting a sex worker isn't really harassment or assault. Be careful and think about your security. Discuss this with your co-workers. In this section, you will find advice and information for making your work safer.

Working with a partner or in a small group can be more secure

Discuss your activities with the other women and write down who your co-workers leave with. Record the identifying marks of the cars you get in (license number, make, colour, dents). Write down clients' addresses, and the places where you intend to work.

If you encountered a bad trick or an attacker, did you report him?

Stella regularly publishes *The Bad Tricks and Aggressors List*. You can receive this list, which will tell you about bad tricks, every month. If you meet a client who is insulting, arrogant, aggressive or violent, or who refuses to pay, you can report him to Stella. Write down as many details as you can about him, his appearance, and how he operates. If you can, get his license plate number.

If you encountered violent or aggressive police officers, did you report the incident?

If you have problems with aggressive, violent or arrogant police officers, you can report them to Stella too. Take down as many details as you can about the officer(s) involved, especially the time of the incident, the car number and the badge number(s) of the officer(s).

When you go to a client's place...

Take the time to tell someone that you have arrived. Once you're in the door, call or pretend to call your agency or a friend, indicating your exact location. Do it in front of the client so that he knows that someone knows where you are.

Do you accept clients that you don't trust?

Trust your instincts. Don't accept clients who are suspicious or seem dangerous.

Do you often work in out-of-the-way, dark places, in alleys, or behind buildings?

Because they are isolated, these places can be more dangerous.

Be aware of your environment: how well do you know your neighborhood and the place where you work?

Do you look for exits that will allow you to escape easily, for the telephone booths, gas stations, and other businesses that are open during your working hours? The nearest police station?

If you are being followed:

Cross the street and go in the other direction; this could confuse your pursuer. Avoid going directly to your home, especially if you live alone. If you see other people on the street, go right up to them to avoid being alone with the person who is following you. If you feel trapped, don't hesitate to go into a phone booth or business and call 911.

Do you carry valuable things on you?

Avoid bringing things that you do not need for your work or that are valuable to you. If you feel unsafe, don't hesitate to put your bag in a mailbox. You can pick it up later at the post office.

Your voice, your instincts, and your body are also excellent weapons against an attacker. Use your voice! Make a lot a noise!

1.4 “DATE RAPE” DRUGS

Many women (and men too) have been raped because a rapist put “date rape” drugs in their drinks. Be aware. Don’t ever accept a drink that a client brings you. The drink must be served by the waitress or the barmaid. If you go to another table, take your drink with you and keep an eye on it. If you go on the stage, leave your drink with a colleague. Although it is recommended that you do not drink while working, it is always preferable to only drink alcohol that you, yourself, have bought. If a client offers you a drink, make sure the bottle has not been previously opened, otherwise abstain from drinking. It is quite easy to add something to a bottle and then recap it. Best be careful at all times. There are two substances on the market that are known as date rape drugs: GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyrate) and Rohypnol. These substances are well known as being used by rapists. Everybody is vulnerable. The following advice is applicable when you work but also when you go out to a bar with your friends.

What does a date rape drug look like?

It is sold as pills or powder. It is colourless, odourless, and tasteless. That is why it is used by rapists and attackers.

The effects

The effects are very fast. The drug provokes a loss of consciousness that can last up to 12 hours. Within 20 to 30 minutes, you will suddenly begin to feel tired and become less coordinated. It feels like an anesthetic like the ones used at the hospital, but it doesn’t put you to sleep. It’s like being very, very drunk. Afterwards, it is often difficult to remember what happened.

Signs of intoxication

After one or two drinks, you feel like you drank 10. Even if you don’t drink alcohol, be careful because the drug can be put in any kind of liquid. However the effects will have a slower effect in non-alcoholic drinks.

What to do?

Talk to someone you trust. Ask this person to take you to a hospital or a CSSS immediately. Don’t leave with a client, even if he is very nice. If possible, don’t leave alone.

If you think you’ve been drugged sexually assaulted, you have maximum 72 hours to go to the hospital. It is important not to take a shower, brush your teeth, do not drink or eat, and try not to urinate. Keep your clothes as a possible proof. All these procedures will help the hospital going through the medical-legal examination that establishes the evidence of a sexual assault.

Do it fast

After a sexual assault, it is important to go to the hospital as soon as possible. The longer you wait, the more it will be difficult to detect these drugs in your blood. Hospitals and CSSSs can do the test to prove you were drugged in the month following the assault. Also, treatments to prevent STIs can be given to rape victims. You have the choice of taking this treatment or not. Contact Stella for advice or just for someone to talk to.



1.5 ABOUT WORKING

Sex work is a trade that requires its own set of skills. Like all new trades, you have to learn these new skills. Ask an experienced sex worker; she can provide you with tricks that experience has taught her. Or, come to the Stella office and pick up a copy of the Constellation Special on Working Conditions to help gain better control of your work.

Are you paid fairly?

Do you have a base salary? Is your salary comparable to that of your co-workers? Are you paid the same amount for the same services?

Are you harassed by your employer?

Certain employers believe it is their right to “test” your services: to touch you or to caress you when and how they like. If this happens remember that, most of the time, employers do this to test your limits. Establish your limits the first time and don't be afraid to say no.

Are you easily influenced?

It is common to meet people who attempt to take advantage of other people's naiveté. Be careful and watch out for yourself.

Do you have unpaid tickets?

Unpaid tickets can cause trouble for you and can lead to an arrest warrant.

Do you carry identification with you?

In most situations, you are not obliged to identify yourself to anyone if you are not under arrest. (There are exceptions - see chapter 3.) If you are arrested, the police can take you to the station and detain you if you are incapable of proving your identity.

Do you block the entrance to a business when you work?

Sometimes this can cause the owner to complain to the police.

Do you litter?

Throwing paper and cans, or, worse, condoms or needles on the ground can cause local residents to complain to the police. If and when possible, respect the environment and encourage your clients to do the same.

If you are a transsexual or a transvestite

The majority of transsexual and transvestite sex workers have strategies for dealing with their clients and with dangerous situations. If you are a transsexual or transvestite with no experience in sex work, ask more experienced sex workers to find out more.

Are you always ready when you go to work?

Do you have everything you need: condoms, lube, massage oil, wigs, sexy lingerie, a vibrator or other sex toys?

Are you psychologically prepared?

Getting yourself in the mood for work before starting can make the time go by quicker and can make the work seem easier.

Are you ready physically?

Feeling good about yourself and being satisfied with your appearance can help you to have more confidence when you are working.

1.6 CONTROLLING CLIENTS



It is more than likely that you will meet difficult clients at some point in your career. If you work in a commercial establishment, there will normally be paid bouncers to protect the employees. If you work for yourself, you will be alone with your clients and you must take appropriate precautions. Pay attention: some clients try to take advantage of inexperienced workers or those who lack self-confidence.

Never believe the client

Certain clients will lie in order to get you to satisfy them in an unusual way. They will tell you that you are the only person they are seeing, or that they do not normally “do this.” They will use all the tricks in the book to make you feel special so that you make exceptions for them. Don’t let yourself get taken in. Stick to your rules, the limits you have set for yourself. You are in control, not the client. Treat the client with respect but don’t trust him.

Laying down your limits

Don’t wait until the service has begun to negotiate with the client. If you grant a favour to a client because you want to, be sure to make him understand that he is not to expect favours every time. Right from the start, establish clearly:

- the services that you offer and those that you don’t;
- the price for each service;
- the time it will take;
- the number of clients that you will accept
- let the client know that someone knows where you are and how long you will be gone for;
- even if you are working on your own, call yourself on your Cell phone and leave yourself a message in front of your client.

Stubborn clients

The best way to manage a conflict with a difficult client is to appear self-confident. You should make him feel that it is not the first time you have had to deal with a person like him and that you are not easily impressed. The rest depends on the situation. Different men respond to different strategies. Rely on your instincts. You can negotiate with the client, try to stop things from getting out of control. Don’t give up and don’t be afraid to say no.

If you feel threatened:

Do what you can to get out of the situation as fast as possible and call for help (911). If the client resists, make loud noises or yell. Draw attention to yourself. Take advantage of his surprise to escape.

Alternatives to anal sex

You can say no. Say you have diarrhea and he should stop pestering you immediately. If you know how, you can put his well-lubricated penis between your legs to simulate anal entry.

What to do with a drunk?

If the client is drunk but is not causing trouble, you can pretend to share his “trip.” If he has problems getting hard or coming, don’t exceed your time limit to do the impossible.

The client is aggressive or disrespectful

Cancel the date. Reimburse him according to the time spent and the services already delivered and leave. It is better to lose some money than to risk going through something unpleasant or dangerous.

Personalize your services

Create a personal style for yourself that will distinguish you from other workers. Your style can also help you to separate your work from your private life.

1.7 MANAGING STRESS

Don't pay attention to the popular belief that sex work is bad or immoral. Evaluate what you do based on your own values. If you have decided to work in the sex trades, this is your own business. Think about why you are working. If you don't know, maybe this reflection will lead you to new decisions about your line of work.

Be conscious of your limits

Sex work can be difficult. Learn to know what you can give and what you must keep for yourself and stick to those decisions. Avoid isolation.

Budget and money problems

Fear of money problems can be a big source of stress that can harm your health and lead you to take unnecessary risks or put yourself in jeopardy. Depending on your situation, the staff at Stella may be able to advise you and help you work out some solutions. Consult the section on money in the Constellation special in the section on working conditions.

Take some time for yourself and make yourself happy

Involving yourself in other activities will help you distance yourself from your work. Learn to recognize what makes you feel good and treat yourself to it. You can get some fresh air or relax in nature. Escape from the “bar beat” and the city. Even if it's for a few days, it will do you some good. Go out with your friends, do what you like to do (shop, have dinner in restaurant, etc.). Remember to spend wisely and save your money. Remember why you got into this line of work and keep your priorities and objectives in mind. Your region, your city, or your neighborhood may offer free cultural or sports activities. Find out what is available.

If ever you think you are losing control

If you feel empty, depressed, alone, or lacking motivation at work and in your personal life, you may be heading for a burnout. It may be difficult to admit, but if you are not happy, drop everything for a while and think about yourself. Talk to someone you trust.







2. HEALTH ON THE JOB

There is a myth that sex workers are responsible for the spread of STIs, including HIV. That's false! Everyone is at risk. The level of risk is not related to the fact that you are a sex worker. In reality, the risk is related to the number of partners you have, the acts that you are willing to perform, and the means that you use to reduce the risks. Being a sex worker also means being a safer sex professional.

2.1 STIs

STIs stands for “sexually transmitted infections,” also called “STDs” (sexually transmitted diseases). 90% of people infected with an STI have no symptoms. STIs are very widespread and can infect anyone. STIs are transmitted by unprotected oral, vaginal, or anal sexual relations. Certain STIs can also be transmitted by body-to-body contact and by handling contaminated objects: vibrators, dildos, other sex toys, etc. Using a condom with a lubricant is the best way to protect yourself from STIs and HIV.

If you think you have an STI or one of your clients is infected, consult a doctor. If you are in the process of treating an STI, protect yourself anyway. You may catch other infections and you continue to be contagious.

The most frequent STIs are:

Chlamydia

Chlamydia can infect the cervix, uterus, urethra, anus, throat, interior of the eyelids, ovaries and testicles. Generally, infected women usually have abnormal secretions (milky liquid or puss) draining from the urethra or vagina. Chlamydia can be treated with antibiotics. If left untreated, it can lead to serious complications.

Gonorrhea (clap)

Gonorrhea can infect the throat, penis, anus, uterus, ovaries and testicles. Often there are no symptoms but it can be accompanied by abnormal secretions from the penis, vagina or anus. Gonorrhea can be treated with antibiotics. If left untreated, it can lead to serious complications and sterility.

Condylomas and HPV

Condylomas, also know as genital warts, are one of the most common blood borne and sexually transmitted infections. They are caused by a virus, Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). Typically, the virus (HPV) is transmitted or contracted through direct genital-to-genital contact with a partner infected by HPV, with or without penetration. Its presence is normally signalled by the appearance

of small warts on the genitals, on the anus and, very rarely, on the mouth. The presence of HPV can, but does not always, increase the risk of developing cervical cancer and, rarely, vulvar, vaginal, penile or anal cancer. The Pap test permits the early detection of lesions, prior to their progression towards pre-cancer or cancer. We highly suggest you pass a Pap test on a regular basis.

Syphilis

Syphilis causes a painless, open sore (an ulcer) which develops exactly at the point of contact with the infected person: the penis, vagina, anus, mouth or throat. The symptoms disappear by themselves after a few weeks, even without treatment, but the disease continues to progress. Syphilis requires treatment with antibiotics to avoid very serious complications later in life.

Scabies and crabs

Scabies cause intense itching, especially during the night, that can interfere with your sleep. Condoms offer no protection against this parasite because it attacks the skin. It can develop between the fingers, on the hands, wrists, in the fold of the elbow, around the waist, penis, vagina, thighs, and ass.

Crabs, also a parasite, develop in the pubic region and spread to the other hairy parts of the body: the underarms, eye lashes, eyebrows, beard, mustache, and thighs. They are visible to the naked eye and look like tiny crabs. Their bites leave blue marks and cause intense itching. You can get rid of scabies and crabs with a lotion containing Permethrin (for example, products like Kwelada®, Nix® or Lindane® — available at the drugstore without a prescription). Disinfect all the cloth that came into contact with them (sheets, clothing, cushions, towels, etc.). If they persist, consult a doctor.

If you feel irritation or itching during sex, **do not use Xylocaine®**. This product “freezes” the skin and can keep you from feeling it if the condom breaks or if the client is taking it off. If you put this product on the client’s penis, it will make it feel numb.

Herpes (genital or oral)

Herpes is a virus that develops in the mouth or on the penis, vulva, vagina or anus. The first infection is the worst (fever, headache, backache). Once you are infected, herpes stays with you for life, although treatment allows you to control the symptoms. Remember that, once you contract herpes, you are contagious even if there is nothing visible.

Hepatitis

Hepatitis is a serious liver disease. Symptoms include jaundice (yellow-coloured eyes and skin), diarrhea and dark urine, stomachaches, loss of appetite and headaches.

Hepatitis A virus is found in excrement and can be transmitted through sex that involves licking the anus or licking a penis or toy that has been in contact with the anus.

Hepatitis B is transmitted by sperm and vaginal secretions. Sexual activities that are most likely to transmit hepatitis B are the same as the ones that transmit HIV: vaginal or anal penetration without a condom and sharing dildos or sex toys without a condom. Hepatitis B is also transmitted through blood and saliva when sharing syringes, razors, toothbrushes, non-sterilized tattooing needles, body piercing equipment, etc.

Hepatitis C is transmitted through the blood. It is possible to be infected by the hepatitis C virus by having unprotected sex with an infected person, if you have small, even invisible, cuts on your skin or mucous membranes, if you have herpes sores or another STI, or if you come into contact with their blood (including menstrual blood). Hepatitis C is also transmitted through blood when sharing syringes, razors, toothbrushes, non-sterilized tattooing needles, body piercing equipment, etc.

Because many people infected with hepatitis do not have specific symptoms, it is possible to become infected, to infect someone, or re-infect yourself without knowing. It is recommended that you take a test for each type of hepatitis at least once. Ask your doctor. Hepatitis is diagnosed using a blood test. There are vaccinations for hepatitis A and B.

Vaginal discharge

Vaginal discharge can be caused by a number of things, including infections and physical irritants.

Vaginitis (yeast infections)

Most yeast infections can be cured with fungicide creams, either prescription or over the counter (Monistat® or Canesten®, for example). It is still advisable to consult a doctor for diagnosis, especially if you have abnormal discharge or if the condition continues to come back.

Vaginal fungus

This type of infection attacks the vulva, vagina, labia (the vaginal lips that are part of the vulva) or clitoris. It is often accompanied by a reddish appearance, serious itching, and a burning sensation during urination or sexual relations. It can be caused by antibiotics, vaginal douching, perfumed soaps, clothes that are too tight, latex, menstruation, stress, frequent and poorly-lubricated sexual relations, an irritation of the penis or testicles, or HIV infection.

Bacterial vaginitis

Bacterial vaginitis is indicated by vaginal discharge that has a fish-like odour which becomes more noticeable if semen comes into contact with the vagina. It is caused by an imbalance in normal vaginal bacteria and it is not contagious. A doctor can prescribe an antibiotic pill or cream for this condition.

HIV/AIDS

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. Associated with AIDS, it attacks the immune system, making it vulnerable to opportunistic infections: pneumonia, chronic bronchitis, cervical cancer in the uterus, vaginitis, brain infections, etc. HIV is transmitted through contact with infected semen or vaginal secretions during unprotected vaginal or anal sex (sex without a condom and lube), as well as through contact with infected blood through injection materials. It can also be transmitted from an infected mother to her child at birth and through breast milk.

The disease has no specific appearance or typical symptoms, but many people who are infected say that they had severe diarrhea for more than a month, accompanied by intense and inexplicable fatigue, a persistent cough, significant weight loss, skin rashes, fever and night sweats. An HIV infection stays with you for life.

Get an HIV test three months after any activity that put you at risk for HIV. The results will not be accurate before that time and the test is the only way you can tell if you are infected.

There are anonymous testing sites where you are not required to provide your name or health care card, and the results will not go into your medical records.

Most people who receive a positive HIV test result will find this news difficult to take. They will need a lot of support in dealing with their situation and in learning how to take care of their health. If you know someone in this situation, call Stella and ask for help. Also, infection with HIV has an impact on your legal situation. See section 2.7: Working with HIV. Also, consult the section on LAW & HIV in the special working conditions section of Constellation, available at the Stella office.

2.2 SAFER SEX

Safer sex is a collection of behaviours that reduce the risk of exchanging bodily fluids. You can masturbate a client (with your hands or breasts), give him an erotic massage, let him look at you and look at him, without having any contact with blood, menstrual blood, sperm or fluids from the penis or vagina. If you have sexual relations, insist on using a condom for each sexual act. As with money, negotiating condom use is more difficult when the client already has a hard-on.

Don't give in if the client insists on unprotected sex at any cost. Cancel the date. Reimburse the client according to the time spent with him and the services already delivered and leave immediately.

Always use a condom

A condom is a barrier between you and anything that can enter your body during sexual relations. To use a condom properly, do not leave it up to the client to be responsible. Insist on putting it on yourself and do it carefully. Whenever possible, use your own condoms. Tell him that it is included in your services. Latex condoms are more effective than condoms made from natural fibre ("lambskin condoms"). Latex does not let HIV or other STIs pass through; natural fibre condoms do allow HIV and other STIs to pass through. There are two types of condoms. The male condom covers the penis while the female condom covers your vulva and is inserted in your vagina. The female condom can be useful with a client who does not want to wear a male condom.



Allergies to latex condoms

If the client is allergic to latex, put a natural fibre condom on his penis and then cover it with a latex condom. If you are allergic, do the opposite.

There are also condoms that are as protective as latex condoms but are made from polyurethane, not latex (polyurethane condoms are sold in drugstores under the brand name Durex Avanti®). These condoms are expensive (three times the price of a latex condom). It is wise to have one or two polyurethane condoms “on reserve” for those clients who claim to be allergic to latex.

The client does not want to use a condom

Sell the merits of using condoms. Statements like: “I am safe,” “I passed the test,” “I won’t be able to come,” or “I’ll lose my hard-on” don’t guarantee that he is healthy. Try to make him accept by using these lines:

- lubricant at the end of the condom makes the penis even more sensitive
- latex makes you “trip”
- the feeling of a textured condom excites you
- you’ll give him a blow job while you put the condom on with your mouth
- sex lasts longer when you use a condom
- you are an expert in giving pleasure to men who wear condoms.

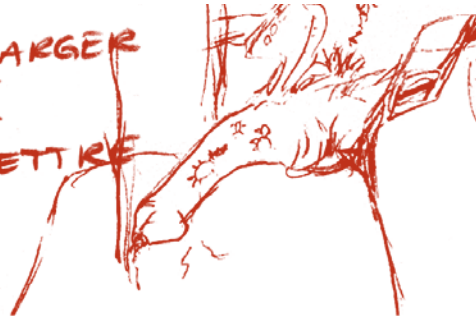
Using a condom

- Check the expiry date and check if there is air in the package (if so it is not sterile).
- Open the package, paying attention not to damage the condom with your nails or teeth.
- Check for the right side before unrolling it on the client to ensure that the part of the condom that will touch you is sterile.
- It is best to wait until the penis is hard before trying to put on a condom. It is difficult to put a condom on a soft or semi-soft penis correctly.
- Before starting, pinch the end of the condom so no air is trapped inside that could break the condom. One or two drops of lubricant on the inside of the condom will make the penis more sensitive and shorten the time needed for the service.
- If the client is not circumcised, pull back the foreskin (that covers the head of the penis) with your hand until the head is completely uncovered. Place the rolled condom on the head while continuing to pinch the little reservoir with your fingers.
- Unroll the condom to the base of the penis.
- Check one last time to see that everything is OK. If you think you made a mistake, start with a new condom. Once unrolled, a condom is no longer sterile and should never be re-used.
- Use a water-based lubricant for vaginal and anal penetration. This reduces friction and prevents the condom from breaking.
- Make sure that the client pulls out of your vagina or anus immediately after having ejaculated. If he is losing his erection, sperm can drain from the base of the condom.
- Hold the base of the condom while pulling his penis out so that it does not stay in your vagina or your anus. Check to make sure the condom stays on the client’s penis, not in your vagina or anus. Do not use spermicide and/or condoms containing Nonoxynol-9 because this increase the risk of contracting HIV and STIs.

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Water-based lubricant

It is important to use lubricant that is water-based. Oil-based lubricants damage condoms. Vaseline®, hand creams, massage oils, Crisco®, lipstick and ointments all contain oil, which can seriously damage the condom. To remove any trace of oil on your hands before touching the condom, you can wash your hands with rubbing alcohol. You can't see the holes with the naked eye but a damaged condom can let STIs, including HIV, get through. To figure out if a lubricant is water-based, put some on your fingers and run water over it. If your fingers are still greasy, then the lubricant is not made with a water base. The container should clearly say that it is safe to use with condoms.

Protect cuts on your skin

Certain infections can enter your system through cuts on your skin. If the client comes on you, make sure that the semen doesn't come into contact with any cuts or scratches that might be on your hands, pubic area, legs, armpits, or anywhere else on your body. If you have cuts:

- start by disinfecting them and cover them with a band-aid
- use gloves (made of latex or hypo-allergenic nitrile) when putting your fingers in a client's vagina or anus.
- also use lubricant to eliminate friction.

Play safe

It's a good idea to use condoms when you play with sex toys (dildos, vibrators, etc.).

If you use different toys or if you change partners, use a different condom on each one.

If you change orifices (mouth, vagina, anus) with a toy, also change the condom.

Toys need to be cleaned before and after each use. Go to your favourite sex shop and ask for information on the best way to clean your toys. Toys are not all made of the same material and there are different ways to take care of different toys. Avoid strong detergents. You can clean most sex toys with mild soap and a wet cloth. Sex toys made of glass can be rinsed with rubbing alcohol. Silicone toys can be cleaned in the dishwasher, placed on the top rack.

Be careful: cleaning your toys is really important but does not guarantee that they are disinfected. It is also as important to use a condom on your toys.

Examining the client When possible, examine your clients each time, including your regulars, even if you use a condom. Certain STIs are found at the base of the penis or in the pubic hair and are contagious even if you use a condom. Remember that the majority of people infected with STIs do not have symptoms.

Try to make the situation comfortable. It is for both people's benefit, as well as for the good of all your other sexual partners.

Check the client before he takes a shower or goes to the bathroom. Certain symptoms can be washed away with water or urine.

You can use a flashlight if the lighting is not adequate. Inspect the penis, the head, the shaft, the pubic hair and the testicles.

What to look for:

On the penis: Unusual red marks, little pinhead-sized pimples, sores, or scabs. Pull back the foreskin if he is not circumcised and look for unusual red marks, sores, pimples or traces of infection.

In the urethra: whitish discharge. Press the penis at the base with your fingers to empty the canal of the urethra. Look carefully at what comes out and notice if the client feels any discomfort.

In the pubic hair: Crabs and crab nits (eggs) on the hair. Look for pimples or anything moving.

On the testicles or between the legs: Unusual red marks, little pimples the size of the head of a pin, sores, or scabs.

On the mouth: If the client wants to kiss or eat you, you should check to see that there are no scabs, ulcers (an open sore on the skin, sometimes with pus secretions) or warts on or around his mouth.

The anus: If the client asks for a service that requires touching his anus, inspect it. Check to see that there are no scabs, ulcers or warts. Place a dental dam on his anus to protect yourself and/or wear gloves while touching him.

After the inspection, wash your hands.



2.3 SELF-EXAMINATION

Being familiar with your own body and genitals will help you notice if something doesn't seem normal. The appearance of genital organs, breasts, and bodily fluids can vary enormously from one woman to another and even in the same woman at different times in her life. Try to observe what yours look like normally. If you notice abrupt changes or if anything seems abnormal or unusual, consult a doctor.

Examine your genital organs

You may have an infection in your uterus, vagina or vulva...

- if you have vaginal discharge that looks unusual: thicker, more abundant, more irritating, flecked with blood or with an unusual odour
- if you bleed when you are not supposed to be menstruating
- if your menstrual pain is worse than usual
- if your vagina or vulva itches or is swollen
- if you see cauliflower-like growths, warts, irritation, sores, blisters, cuts, crabs or scabies
- if it burns during penetration or when you go to the bathroom.

You may have an anal infection...

- if you have regular or unusual discharge (like pus or mucus)
- if you bleed (if the bleeding follows a painful anal penetration, it could be an internal rupture)
- if your anus itches, is numb or swollen
- if you find warts, ulcers, or irritation
- if it burns when you go to the bathroom.

Examine your breasts

Breasts have a tendency to change shape during one's life. Examine your breasts once a month, one week after your menstruation. You will learn to know their shape and become familiar with the normal lumps if there are any.

Breast cancer

One woman in nine is at risk of developing breast cancer during her life. Generally, if it is treated early enough, the majority of women recover. Therefore, it is important to know how to identify a cancer in order to avoid the worst.

In front of the mirror

Put your arms at your sides and try to detect any change in the size, shape, texture, or skin of your breasts. Lean forward, facing the mirror, curving your shoulders with your elbows in front of you. Look carefully to see if there has been a change in the shape of your breasts. Put your hands behind your head and press firmly to verify the exterior and interior surfaces of your breasts.

In the shower

Place your left hand behind your head and examine your left breast with your right hand, keeping your fingers very straight. Examine your breast in a clockwise direction, with circular movements, moving towards the nipple. Pay special attention to the outer part toward the armpit. Repeat the procedure, examining the right breast with your left hand.

Lying down

Place a small pillow under your left shoulder and put your left hand behind your head. Examine your left breast with your right hand moving in a clockwise direction. Flatten and explore the nipple with your fingers held flat to detect changes. Repeat the procedure with your right breast, using your left hand. If you find anything unusual, consult a doctor immediately. Remember that prevention is the best way to fight cancer.

Breast implants

If you have breast implants, verify often and regularly that everything is OK. Do the regular breast examination and find out how to examine the state of your implants. If your implants are leaking or if you find something that is unusual, consult a doctor immediately.

2.4 GENERAL ADVICE ABOUT HEALTH

Being cold, hungry or sick can lead you to take unnecessary risks. To find out where to find food, clothes, or an inexpensive place to sleep, or where to get appropriate health care, talk to the women who work with you or call Stella.

Are you cold when you work?

If you are an employee, insist that the heat be turned up. If you work in the street, remember that sexy dresses are also chilly and that wet feet freeze. Your body is your instrument for work. Take care of it and it will take care of you.

Do you eat enough?

Healthy eating will give you more energy and keep you in good health.

Do you sleep enough?

Fatigue can stress you out and can lead to burnout. Being tired weakens your ability to withstand stress and disease. Rest enough so that you can have as much energy as possible.

Do you have good shoes?

High-heeled shoes are very chic and sexy but they can also cause a lot of problems with your back, your feet and your posture.



Are you in shape?

Sports, physical activity and stretching help keep you in shape. Relaxation, massages, and a personal sex life will help you to escape from your work from time to time.

Are you using hormones?

If you are on a hormone treatment? Find out what side effects are associated with the hormones you are taking, especially if you smoke. Ask your doctor to explain them carefully and learn to recognize them.

Do you have a health problem that you can't explain?

Consult a doctor; it could be serious even if it doesn't always bother you. Don't be afraid to be honest with your doctor; the doctor's opinion of you is less important than your health. Find a doctor you feel comfortable talking to (consult Stella for references if you can't find the right doctor).

2.5 YOUR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

There is a social myth that sex workers can't be good mothers. That's false! Many sex workers raise children as capably as anyone who is not involved in sex work. If you are pregnant and you decide to carry the baby to term, you should know that it is possible for you to provide your child with a healthy life.

The menstrual cycle

If you have a regular monthly cycle, you can figure out the days when you are more likely to become pregnant. If your cycle is 28 days, you can become pregnant (you are fertile) between the 10th and the 18th day after the beginning of your last period.

The length and frequency of menstruation vary from one woman to another and even for the same woman throughout her life. If you skipped a month, or if you stopped earlier than usual, this does not automatically mean you are pregnant. The menstrual cycle can sometimes be influenced by stress, sudden weight loss, and the use of alcohol, methadone and other drugs. However, if you miss your period frequently, consult a doctor or a gynecologist.

Pregnancy

The absence of menstruation, vomiting in the morning, and sensitive breasts are indications of pregnancy. If you think you are pregnant, consult a doctor or get yourself a pregnancy test. You can find these tests in all drugstores or in women's health clinics.



Working when pregnant

Always use a condom even if you are pregnant. This is very important because STIs can infect the baby during the pregnancy or the birth. Too much alcohol or drugs can cause a miscarriage or harm the unborn child.

Contraception

If you use contraception, it is easier for you to decide when you become pregnant. There are several methods of contraception: oral contraceptives (the pill), the patch, contraceptive ring, the contraceptive injection, intrauterine device. Some methods work better than others and may better suit you according to your needs. To help you find the means of contraception that suits you best, consult a nurse or doctor. Regardless of the contraceptive method you choose, keep in mind that to protect yourself from STIs, condoms should always accompany your method of contraception.

The morning-after pill

To avoid an unwanted pregnancy after being sexually assaulted, or after a condom breaks, or if you've had a serious error in taking the contraceptive pill, you can take the morning-after pill. The morning-after pill is sold without a prescription; just ask a pharmacist at any drugstore.

The morning-after pill uses the same hormones as the birth control pill except that it is much stronger and taken in one dose. It should be taken within 72 hours following a sexual relations that involved vaginal penetration.

The morning-after pill provokes menstruation and can have very strong side effects like headaches, stomachaches and fatigue.

Abortion

Abortion results in the termination of a pregnancy that has already started. It is usually done between the 6th and 20th week following the last menstruation. After this period, abortion becomes more complicated.

There are two ways a doctor can induce abortion. They can use the vacuum aspiration method (dilatation, suction and scraping) or induce abortion with medication. This service is free at a hospital but there are also private clinics that offer the service for a fee. Consult a women's health centre for more information and references. After an abortion, you have to remember that nothing should enter your vagina for a few days at least. You shouldn't even take a bath until you have healed. If you know you are pregnant and you decide not to have the child, talk to someone you trust. In the Services section of this handbook, there are useful references to clinics and other resources.

2.6 SEXUAL ASSAULT

There is a myth that forcing a sex worker to have a sexual relation is not sexual assault. That's false! If someone forces you to have sex without your consent, with or without penetration, this is an act of violence. If you do not want the sexual relation, then it is a sexual assault. There are a number of ways to react to sexual assault. Breathe. Stay as calm as possible in order to be alert and able to act at the first opportunity. Try to escape and call for help. Self-defense training can give you confidence and make you better able to protect yourself if you are sexually assaulted.

If you are assaulted sexually:

Don't be afraid to press charges. There are centres specialized in helping victims of sexual assault. They can offer you support and accompany you during the legal proceedings.

Don't wash off the evidence: during the medical-legal examination it will be easier to establish proof. Also, do not wash the clothing you were wearing when you were attacked—take it to the hospital with you for the examination. Talk to someone you trust. You may not feel anything at first but sometimes the effects can appear later, upsetting the way you live and behave.

The clinic or hospital

You have maximum 72 hours to have the medical-legal examination to establish evidence of a sexual assault. The sooner the examination is done, the greater the chance that evidence (proof) will be found. You do not have to decide right away if you want to press charges against your assailant: you can receive medical care without pressing charges. The evidence that can identify your assailant will be kept for up to six months. Get information about preventive treatment for HIV infection. It can prevent you from becoming infected with HIV following an assault. This is not a means of prevention if you did not want to oblige a client to use a condom. This treatment is for major problems only.

Get information about vaccination for hepatitis A and B. Get a test for STIs. If a condom ever ruptures, you can have access to this treatment.

2.7 WORKING WITH HIV

If you test seropositive for HIV, you are living with HIV (and possibly with AIDS). Take the time to think about what you are going to do and to evaluate your working conditions.

Working with HIV makes things more complicated because your immune defenses are weaker and the effects of illness can be greater. You could also be more susceptible to fungal vaginitis, herpes and other serious infections. Condyloma acuminatum (genital warts) are worse and it is harder to get over a cold.

Under Canadian law, if you have HIV and engage in sexual relations involving vaginal or anal penetration without the use of a condom, sexual relations considered to carry a “high risk” of HIV transmission, you are obligated to reveal to your sexual partners that you are seropositive or that you have contracted HIV. If you engage in this type of sexual activity and omit to reveal to your partner that you are seropositive, this is considered a criminal act and you are liable to prosecution and imprisonment. Even if your partner is not infected during the sexual encounter, you may still be accused, prosecuted and jailed. The law makes it a criminal act to expose someone to a significant risk of contracting HIV during a sexual relation.

The gray area in the law

The law does not clearly state that some one who is seropositive is obligated to reveal his or her condition when using a condom during sexual relations. Moreover, the law does not state clearly that one is obligated to reveal one's condition when engaging in other forms of sexual activity, such as fellatio.

2.8 USING DRUGS

According to another popular myth, all sex workers are junkies. Some people think that a woman would have to be under the influence of drugs to work in the sex trades. This is false! Drug abuse affects everyone and for different reasons. If you use drugs or alcohol, here is some advice on how to control your consumption. For additional advice on drug consumption while working, consult the Dope Guide at Stella.

Sharing drug paraphenalia

There is no law in Canada which obliges a person living with HIV to reveal that he or she has contracted HIV when sharing drug paraphenalia with another person (eg. needles, crack pipes). In certain cases (eg. sharing needles and syringes to inject drugs), there is a “high risk” of HIV transmission. You should consequently assume that this act will be considered under the law as carrying with it a “significant risk” of HIV transmission. This means that a person is legally obligated to reveal his or her seropositivity. (As this activity also carries with it a high risk of transmitting other blood borne infections such as hepatitis B or C, it would be possible for some one to be prosecuted for failing to reveal that he or she has contracted hepatitis C. At the present time, however, there exists no jurisprudence on the matter under Canadian law.)

Public health laws

Doctors have the right to divulge the seropositive status of a patient whose behaviour puts the health of others at risk. For example, an HIV+ person who continues to have unprotected sexual relations or who voluntarily shares unclean works could be considered dangerous to herself/himself and others.

On the job

- Try to stay straight or sober in order to manage work-related stress.
- Getting high or drunk can calm you down or stimulate you at first but sooner or later, you will have to deal with whatever you’re trying to avoid.
- Try not to use or drink to the point where you lose control of your actions. Excessive consumption can put your health and your security at risk.
- You may take more security or health risks when you are stoned or drunk. If you’re feeling “out of it”, you may decide to accept a client that you don’t really trust or give in to a client who doesn’t want to use a condom.
- Being intoxicated can put you in a dangerous situation with a bad client. He may not respect your limits, or he may rob or assault you.

Mixing drugs can be explosive

Mixing drugs can be very dangerous. Certain drugs don’t mix well. Some are “downers” and some are “uppers” — taken together they can cause a really bad trip or even cause respiratory or heart problems. Some drugs take more time to take effect than others. This makes it difficult to calculate the exact quantity you can take safely.

Mixing tranquilizers like Valium, Mogadon or Rohypnol with alcohol, heroin or methadone can be fatal.



Try small doses of new purchases

Each time you receive a new delivery, try a small quantity first. If the drugs are bad, you will know before it is too late. The same advice applies if you haven't done any for a long time. Your tolerance goes down when you haven't used in a while. If you plan on using with a client, you should use your own drug or call your own dealer so you won't use bad quality drugs or drugs you would not be used to.

Avoid carrying drugs on you

The Criminal Code forbids possession of drugs. If you get caught, you can have serious problems with the justice system. There is no law that forbids carrying needles, whether they have been used or not. Remember that no one has the right to be intoxicated in a public place.

Should you lose control

It is possible that you could end up in the vicious circle of using and working: you use drugs to work and you work to pay for the drugs. If you have lost control and you want to get out, talk to someone you trust.

Injecting

HIV, hepatitis C and other STIs that travel in blood can be spread easily through infected needles. Also, clean needles hurt less, don't pop your veins, leave fewer marks and cause fewer abscesses.

If you shoot, always disinfect the injection site before inserting the needle, choose a new vein each time and always use a new or sterilized syringe.

- Don't loan your works (syringes, spoons and cotton) and never borrow anyone else's, even from people you trust.
- Use a new syringe and new disinfected piece of cotton for each injection.
- Use sterilized water and a clean spoon each time.
- Throw out the rest of the water immediately after the injection so that nobody reuses it (you or anyone else).

If you do not have new needles

Disinfect used syringes, even if they are yours. Waste material could be stuck somewhere inside or someone could have used it without telling you. That needle goes right into your vein and one infected syringe can infect your whole body.

Cleaning your syringe

- Rinse the syringe with cold water until all traces of blood are gone. Do this three times.
- Fill the syringe with household bleach and shake it for 30 seconds.
- Empty the syringe, refill it with bleach and shake it for another 30 seconds.
- Empty the syringe and refill it with bleach for a third time.
- Then rinse it with clean, cold water at least three times. Empty it each time by shooting the water from the point of the needle.
- This process help reduce the risk of transmission of AIDS and hepatitis but not eliminate them.

How to dispose of used needles

Syringes that lie around or are discarded anywhere can lead to injuries and the risk of infection with hepatitis, tetanus, or HIV if someone steps on them or plays with them. No one likes to find used syringes in front of their house, on the sidewalk, or in parks or playgrounds. Proper disposal of syringes helps to avoid hurting yourself or others. Also, it improves relations with the residents of the neighborhood where you live or work.

The best solution is to exchange them at an anonymous needle exchange centre. You can get rid of your used syringes with no worry, get new ones at the same time, and it doesn't cost anything.

Don't leave syringes lying around at home — put them in a glass container that the needles can't pierce. At some needle exchanges you can get a yellow container specifically made for throwing away used works.





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3. THE LAW AND YOUR RIGHTS

Canadian federal laws on prostitution and certain municipal by-laws affect your working conditions. Legal authorities take for granted that prostitution violates society's moral code and they try to prevent sex work in all its forms.

Whether you're a prostitute, an escort, a masseuse, a dancer, a porn actress or a dominatrix, the laws that control prostitution, and certain municipal by-laws, are used to control your work. To discourage you from working, the authorities may give you tickets you have to pay or they threaten you with prison. and impose bail conditions that are impossible to respect. This situation feeds the myth that, because you offer sexual services, you are a criminal. That's false. You are not a criminal. You are a citizen with responsibilities, rights, and freedoms.

Learn what your rights and freedoms are as well as the laws that control your work. This knowledge could be useful if you are ever in trouble with the police or judicial authorities. If you have problems with the justice system, the information contained in *The XXX Guide* will not be enough. If you cannot afford a lawyer, contact Stella. We have references for legal aid clinics and free legal advice.

3.1 THE CRIMINAL CODE

Prostitution is not, and never has been, illegal in Canada but the majority of activities that surround it are. The Canadian Criminal Code contributes to making your work quasi-illegal and it also creates conditions that increase harassment of, and discrimination against, sex workers.

Offences related to prostitution

ARTICLE 210: *The act of operating or being found in a "bawdy house" (a place maintained, occupied by, or visited by one or more persons with the objective of prostitution or of committing indecent acts).*

This section of the Criminal Code forbids you from working as an escort or an erotic masseuse in your home or in any other specific place. It also forbids certain contact dances (\$10) which involve touching genitals.

ARTICLE 211: *The act of taking, or of transporting, someone to a "bawdy house."*

This section limits your access to any accompanied service. A taxi driver or a friend, for example, could be charged with transporting you to your workplace: a massage parlour, the home of an escort, a bar which offers contact dances, etc.

ARTICLE 212: *The act of influencing a person to practice prostitution or of living completely, or partially, from the revenues of prostitution.*

This section creates problems for both your personal and professional relationships by forbidding anyone in your entourage from benefiting from money coming from prostitution.

ARTICLE 213: *The act of communicating with another person, in a public place, with the objective of practicing prostitution.*

This section creates problems for communicating in places within the view of by-standers. Your contacts can be interpreted as an offer of services, as solicitation, and can cause you legal problems.

An escort who goes to her clients' homes, and who is prudent in her way of advertising and communicating, limits the potential for problems with the justice system. She does not solicit and can not be found in a "bawdy house," or a brothel; so sections 210 and 213 of the Criminal Code do not apply. On the other hand, a worker who receives her clients at home can be accused of operating or being found in a "bawdy house" because section 210 of the Criminal Code applies.

Other offenses

Other criminal charges may also be used to control your activities. These offenses do not relate directly to sex work but are often used against sex workers.

They are:

Section 173:	Indecent acts in a public place
Sections 89 and 90:	Carrying a weapon
Section 403:	Identifying oneself with a name other than one's own
Section 139:	Obstruction of justice
Section 129:	Interfering with the work of a police officer

Working as an escort and working at home

If you use a private place, a private telephone, and a private computer line to discuss your services, your work is legal. Communication for the purposes of prostitution (i.e. solicitation) must occur in a public place in order to be criminal. But be careful: cellular phones, cars and phone booths are considered public. To advertise your services, many newspapers require that you be registered (have a permit). Ask the person in charge of the classified ads or your employer to know how to best advertise your services.

- Be discreet.
- Be sure that your ad is not too explicit. Avoid giving the prices and the types of services.
- Try to know with whom you are doing business. Develop a regular clientele.
When meeting a new client, discuss matters at length by phone and have a date with him elsewhere before taking him to your home.

Nude dancing

Dancing nude, with or without touching, is legal but the permitted touching is subject to certain restrictions. Only touching of the breasts and the buttocks is permitted. All contact with genitals can be interpreted as an act of prostitution or indecency. Touching must occur in a place out of the view of other clients (a booth).

Fraternizing with clients: Since the Quebec Court of Appeal decision in 1999, it is now possible to fraternize, talk or drink at a client's table.

Erotic couples: Dances displaying two women together, two men, or a man and a woman are legal only if there is no sexual penetration.

Working outside Quebec: If you choose to work outside Quebec, get information on the requirements: permits, vaccinations, etc.

Erotic telephone line

Erotic telephone and erotic information lines are considered private (unless you use a cellular phone) and are not illegal on the condition that you do not refer to indecent acts with children or animals.



3.2 MUNICIPAL BY-LAWS AND THE HIGHWAY CODE

Municipal by-laws and the Highway Code are used to control sex work, particularly street prostitution. Breaking these by-laws is not a criminal act. You will not be arrested but you risk getting a ticket. If you believe that the ticket is unjust, you can challenge it. If you do not challenge it, you are obliged to pay a fine. You will have problems with the justice system if you do not pay your tickets. Remember, municipal by-laws and the Highway Code vary in different cities and provinces.

Police give tickets most often for the following offenses:

The Highway Code

Section 396:	Not wearing your seat belt correctly in a moving vehicle
Sections 444 et 445:	Not obeying traffic and pedestrian crossing lights
Section 448:	Being in the street for the purposes of communication with an occupant of a vehicle
Section 450:	Crossing a public route other than at an intersection reserved for crossing
Section 452:	Walking in the street

3.3 YOUR RIGHTS

It is important that you know your rights. For all relations with police, we suggest you stay calm, be polite, and avoid confrontation.

Identification

You are not required to identify yourself to the police except if:

- You are under arrest
- You are driving a car: then you must furnish your driver's license, your registration, and proof of insurance
- You are drunk or you are a minor
- You are found in a public place (park, street, etc.) at night
- They suspect that you have committed a criminal act

Not identifying yourself could result in the police arresting you for vagrancy.

If the police stop you in any other circumstances, you are not obliged to tell them who you are. If they insist and they ask that you follow them, you can ask if you are under arrest. If the answer is no, you can politely tell them that you have no desire to identify yourself or to follow them. Police officers are required to identify themselves. The officer must provide proof of identity, i.e. wear a badge with his/her name and badge number. On the other hand, insisting that your rights be respected can provoke a feeling of frustration in police officers who may not like having to justify themselves.

Arrest

If a police officer arrests you, he/she has the obligation to tell you why you are being arrested and to read you your rights. A police officer cannot arrest you if you are not formally accused of committing a crime. The police can arrest you if you have consumed too much alcohol or are under the influence of drugs and if they have reasonable grounds to believe that you are in the process of, or about to begin, committing a crime.



Your rights:

You have the right to remain silent, except for identifying yourself. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the right to say nothing at all until your lawyer is present. You have the right to a lawyer: ask to see yours and, if you do not have a lawyer, ask that one be assigned to you.

Your obligations

You must identify yourself: give your name, address, and date of birth. Be careful. Anything you say (confession, lies, information about others, etc.) can be used against you in the indictment. Anything you do (swearing at the police, fighting, making fun of them, etc.) may lead to additional problems.

You can be arrested with or without a warrant

A warrant is a piece of paper that authorizes the police to arrest you and, sometimes, to search your home. You have the right to read this document. It should be made out in your name, provide a description of the charge, and be signed by a judge. You can be arrested without a warrant if you are caught “in the act,” if the police believe you have just committed a crime, or if they believe that there could be a warrant issued in your name.

Interrogation

Say nothing until you are in the presence of a lawyer.

Everything that you say can be used in the charge. The police can use all sorts of techniques to make you talk:

- good cop, bad cop
- promises
- lies
- intimidation
- violence

Personal searches

The police cannot search you if you are not under arrest. It is none of their business what you have in your pockets or in your bag unless they have reasonable grounds to believe you could have a weapon or drugs. However, if a police officer arrests you, he/she can conduct a simple search by going through your things and your pockets, or conducting a full body search. Only a female police officer can do a full body search on a woman.

Searching the premises

If the police come to your home, you do not have to let them in immediately. You can meet them outside or speak to them through the door. Have the police said that they have a warrant? They have to show it to you. Check to see that your name is correct, that the charge is on it, and that it has been signed by a judge. If everything is in order, you must let them enter. Doing anything else could cause you serious legal problems. Interfering with the work of a police officer or assaulting, e.g. hitting, a police officer, are criminal charges. During the search, you can follow the police around and take note of what they did and what they took. This information could be useful if you believe they have done something out of line. Don't be intimidated by their comments.

Minor offenses

Soliciting and being found in a “bawdy house” are criminal offenses but minor ones. They are less serious than other charges and the police are obliged to give you a summons to appear in court. You must show up for your trial. The police must release you without taking your fingerprints or your photo unless you do not have your identification papers on you; there are already charges or an arrest warrant for you; or you have violated a court order like a curfew; or an order not to drink or not to be found in a bar.

If you are required to appear in court

The justice system is a very formal and serious milieu that can be intimidating. Don't let yourself be impressed by this context. However, in the long run, it is wiser to stay calm and be polite when dealing with judges.

Police brutality

If you are a victim of police brutality, you can make a complaint to the Police Ethics Commission by providing, if possible, the following proof:

- a medical certificate which describes the extent of your injuries;
- photos of your injuries;
- witnesses who can say how you behaved before and after the incident;
- notes describing in detail everything that happened: the date, the time, the place, the number of police officers who were present, their descriptions, their names and badge numbers, what they said and what they did.



3.4 REQUESTING A PARDON

A request for pardon is a procedure that allows you to close your criminal file and limit others' access to it. If your request for a pardon is accepted, your file will be filed separately from the active records and no one can have access to it without the authorization of Attorney General of Canada.

A pardon does not erase a record. If the police or a customs officer or an employer asks you if you have a police record, you should reply yes but that you were pardoned. Once you have been pardoned, an employer has no right to refuse you work because of your past record.

You are eligible to request a pardon if you have already been convicted of a criminal offense. If you were not convicted (the charge was dropped or you were acquitted), then you do not need a pardon.

To file a request for a pardon, you must have completed the sentence (a fine or prison) and a certain amount of time must have gone by since your last conviction (from three to five years, depending on the conviction).

A pardon is not final. It is a privilege and, therefore, it can be withdrawn. If you commit another offense, if you have further legal complications, or if it is found that you lied in your request for the pardon, then it is possible that it will be withdrawn.





4. SERVICES

The various social myths and the numerous laws relating to sex work can make access to quality services difficult. A quality service is provided with respect and without discrimination. Do not accept being treated with contempt or arrogance. You are a citizen with the same rights and the same freedoms as everyone else. If you have problems with either community or institutional services, the team at Stella can help you.

4.1 STELLA

Stella is a community group created and run by sex workers and ex-sex workers. Stella is for people who identify as female and work in the sex trades: women, transsexuals, transvestites. If you are a prostitute, an escort, a nude dancer, a masseuse, a phone sex specialist, a dominatrix, or a porn actress or model, Stella can be useful in your work.

Stella's mandate is to improve the quality of your life...

...by addressing the risks that threaten you – for example, violence, sexual harassment, infections. Stella provides you with the tools you need so that you can take control of your work, your safety and your health.

Stella achieves its objectives...

- By offering you support and information
- By educating the public and service providers, making them aware of your reality
- By fighting the discrimination that you live with
- By promoting the decriminalization of your trade

Stella offers you a range of services and activities

- A drop-in centre, active listening, and references to community, medical, and legal services
- Outreach (providing support for you where you work)
- Materials for and advice about prevention of HIV and other STIs (condoms and needles are available)
- Materials for, and advice about, preventing violence. For example, every month we publish *The Bad Tricks and Aggressors List*
- *ConStellation*, a magazine written by and for sex workers
- Information meetings on various themes
- Community suppers
- Support for the activities of the Coalition for the Rights of Sex Workers (Coalition pour les droits des travailleuses et travailleurs du sexe)
- Accompaniment (when you need support)
- Various committees
- Various guides on sex work which are available from Stella
- Medical clinic (walk-in and confidential) see Stella's bulletin for dates
- Floating legal clinic, free advices for sex workers



Why should you get involved?

- To end your isolation
- To have access to a place where you can let off steam, that offers you support and invaluable advice
- To have access to a place that offers you support and invaluable advice
- To inform yourself about the laws that concern sex work and the different ways that they are applied
- To express yourself freely and share your reality with other women who are living similar experiences
- To receive *The Bad Tricks and Aggressors List* at home or at your work place
- To receive the calendar of upcoming activities

Stella

Administration 514 285-1599

Help line 514 285-8889

www.chezstella.org

4.2 GROUPS FOR AND/OR BY SEX WORKERS

Coalition for the Rights of Sex Workers

A group of individuals and organizations who fight for the rights of people who work in the sex trades.

info@montrealcoalition.com

The Quebec sex workers union

union_tds_quebec@yahoo.ca

Projet Vénus

Activities, support and services offered to sex workers.

Laval

Support

514 823-0705

Office

450 669-1680

Projet Catwomen Estrie

Activities, support and services for sex workers

Sherbrooke

819 823-6704

Projet Catwoman Mauricie

Meetings with sex workers, information and support

Trois-Rivieres

819 374-5740

Projet Catwoman Drummondville

La piaule

819 474-2484

Projet Catwoman Valleyfield

PACT de rue: 450 370-2420

Projet Catwoman St-Jerome

Centre SIDA Amitie

450 431-7432

Projet Catwoman Quebec

(PIPQ)

418 641-0168 or 1 866 641-0168

ÉMISS-ère

ÉMISS-ère is a community organization located in Longueuil that promotes health and sexual well-being for different populations.

www.emiss-ere.ca

450 651-9229

Rézo

An HIV prevention group specifically for men. Rézo also has a program for male sex workers.

Drop-in centre

514 529-7777



4.3 COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

Security

Montreal Sexual Assault Centre

Crisis line, information and resources, individual counseling, medical-legal and medical-social information.

514 934-4504

SOS violence conjugale (SOS for spousal abuse victims)

Telephone reception, evaluation and reference service – open 24 hours, seven days a week.

514 873-9010 or 1 800 363-9010

Montreal Crime Victims' Assistance Centre (CAVAC)

Telephone services, comfort, moral support, information about legal rights and remedies, references and accompaniment for victims during legal procedures:

514 277-9860

Health

Clinique du quartier-latin (medical clinic)

Diagnosis and treatment services for sexually transmitted infections and HIV. Has a dermatology clinic and psychological services.

With or without appointment.

514 285-5500

Centre de santé des femmes de Montréal (women's health care centre)

Women's health care services

514 270-6110

Women's health care abortion clinic

514 270-6114

Clinique médicale de l'Alternative

Diagnosis and treatment clinic for STIs, gynecology.

With or without appointment

514 281-9848

For abortion. With appointment

514 281-6476

Comité PASF (Prévention Action Sida Femme)

Organizes an annual provincial meeting of seropositive women in Québec

comitepasf@yahoo.com

Clinique l'Actuel

Diagnoses and treatment services for sexually transmitted infections and HIV.

With or without appointment

514 524-1001

ACCM (information about HIV and AIDS)

Telephone service for information and references about HIV/AIDS in English.

Open Monday to Thursday from 9 to 5

514 527-0928

Drugs: help and referrals for problems with substance abuse

Telephone information and referral service. Open 24 hours for help or referral concerning alcohol or drug abuse, addiction, etc.

514 527-2626 or 1 800 265-2626

Gambling: help and referrals

Telephone information and referral service. Open 24 hours for people who have problems with gambling

514 527-0140 or 1 800 461-0140

Suicide-Action Montreal

Suicide crisis line, information, and referrals. Open 24 hours, seven days a week. For people with suicidal tendencies, for their families and friends, and for those who have a friend or a family member who committed suicide.

Free and confidential

514 723-4000 or 1 866 277-3553

Grossesse-secours (pregnancy crisis line)

Telephone support line, information and references relating to pregnancy, birth control, and access to abortion services. Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. For women who are pregnant or think they may be. Free and confidential service.

514 271-0554

CACTUS (community action centre for injection drug users)

Information, prevention, references, needle exchange and condom distribution, outreach in the downtown and the south central areas of Montreal:

514 847-0067

ASTT(e)Q (Quebec Health Action for Transvestites and Transsexuals) - pronounced "Aztec"

Telephone support line, information and references concerning health issues for transsexuals and transvestites

514.847.0067

Spectre de rue

Drop-in and support centre for people with problems concerning substance abuse, homelessness, mental health; needle exchange and condom distribution

514 528-1700

Drop-in centre

514 524-5197

L'Anonyme

Mobile needle exchange and condom distribution service from Monday to Saturday. Support services, references and accompaniment (direct to the mobile van)

514 236-6700

Dopamine

Information, prevention, references, needle exchange and condom distribution. Outreach in the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve district

514 251-8872

Dignity**The Elizabeth Fry Society (Quebec branch)**

Transition house for women leaving detention, the Eve program (shoplifting support group), legal services, probation services, support program for women incarcerated at Tanguay and Joliette Prisons, documentation centre.

514 489-2116

Inform-Elle

Legal support service; information and reference; personal or telephone interviews; training in legal procedures and on family law and rights:

450 443-8221

CODAS (organizing and defense committee for the rights of people on social assistance)

Support for the respect of the rights of people with low incomes or on social assistance.

514 528-9226

Mouvement action chômage (unemployment support)

Support for the respect of the rights of recipients of employment insurance:

514 271-4099

Mouvement Action Justice (MAJ)

For information about your rights and legal advice. Support for complaints against lawyers, policemen and judges.

514 273-4302 www.majquebec.org

Tel-aide (telephone crisis line)

Active telephone listening service, information and references. Open 24 hours for people in distress:

514 935-1101

ADDICQ (Association pour la Défense des Droits et l'Inclusion des personnes qui consomment des drogues du Québec)

Defending the rights and interests of drug consumers:

514 847-0067 ext.214

4.3.1 HOUSING

Auberge Madeleine

Short-term shelter for women who face difficulty. Support services, help and references

514 597-1499

L'abri d'Espoir

Emergency shelter for homeless women. Active listening, support and references. Short and medium-term housing.

514 934-5615

Le Chaînon ("The Link")

Housing for women who face difficulty. Active listening, support for organizing the necessary procedures, therapy. Short and long term housing.

514 845-0151

Maison Marguerite

Short-term shelter and help, active listening, support and references.

Information, consultation, accompaniment and problem identification:

514 932-2250

Native Women's Shelter

Shelter for native women with or without children. Short or medium-term housing (about 12 weeks).

514 933-4688

Passages

Housing for young women (18 to 30 years old) who face difficulty. Emergency housing for three days, short-term housing for 31 days and a food bank. Social reinsertion projects (ACDR and the art project).

514 875-8119

4.3.2 FOOD AND CLOTHING

Chez Doris

Drop-in centre, meals, friendship, all sorts of activities, medical and legal assistance.

514 937-2341

Chic Resto Pop

Inexpensive, healthy meals. Employability program in semi-specialized trades:

514 521-4089

Mission Bon Accueil

Food bank and clothing, Christmas baskets. Counseling for needy families:

514 937-9317

St-Vincent de Paul

Inexpensive clothing and help for all people in need.

514 526-5937

Sun Youth

Emergency services, 24 hours a day (food, clothing, medical prescription assistance program).

514 842-1214

4.4 INSTITUTIONS

General information

Communication Québec

Reference to appropriate government services, general information concerning Quebec government programs:

514 644-4545 or 1 800 644-4545

État civil du Québec / Quebec vital statistics department

Collection of vital information for citizens: for obtaining birth, marriage and death certificates:

514 864-3900 or 1 800 567-3900

Security

911

In an emergency, dial 911.

Police

To contact your community police station, dial 280-01+the number of your local police station, for example: to get station 23, you dial:

280-0123

IVAC (compensation for victims of criminal acts)

Compensation (financial or other wise) for victims of criminal acts:

514 906-3019 or 1 800 561-4822

Health

Québec health insurance commission

Government insurance that gives you free access to health services:

514 864-3411 or 1 800 561-9749

Info-health at CSSSs (Centres de santé et des services sociaux)

Free telephone service, 24 hours a day, for medical information and references. There are many CSSSs in the city and they all have clinics that offer general and specialized medical services with and without appointment:

81

CSSS des Faubourgs

514 527-2361

Hospitals/emergency rooms

Hôtel-Dieu Hospital, 3840 Saint-Urbain Street: 514 890-8000

Notre-Dame Hospital, 1560 Sherbrooke Street East: 514 890-8000

St-Luc Hospital, 1058 St-Denis Street: 514 890-8000

Legal

Quebec Human Rights and Youth Rights Commission (Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse du Québec)

Investigation of complaints concerning discrimination and harassment forbidden by the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms:

514 873-5146 or 1 800 361-6477

Montreal Legal Aid, criminal division

Legal representation for people who can not afford a lawyer: 514 842-2233

McGill University Legal Information Clinic

Clinic for information and references on legal questions: 514 398-6792

Police Ethics Commission

Evaluation of complaints concerning abuse of power by police:

514 864-1784

National Parole Board

Provides information to victims of criminal acts about persons who are in federal detention centres; also helps with requests for pardons:

514 283-4584 or 1 800 874-2652

Labor Standards Commission

Establishes and applies fundamental rights for salaried workers: minimum hourly wage, breaks, payment, security, cleanliness, etc.

514 873-7061
1 800 265-1414

Rental Board

Establishes and applies standards concerning relations between you and your landlord: rent increases, cleanliness, security, repairs, etc.

514 873-2245

Money

Emploi et solidarité sociale du Québec (Quebec Employment and Social Solidarity)

Distributes a minimum monthly revenue for people who do not work, pays for courses enabling a person to qualify for a job, helps you find work:

1 888 643-4721

Employment insurance

Replaces your revenue from the moment that you lose your job, until you find another one. Pays for courses enabling you to qualify for another job; helps you find work: 1 800 808-6352

Family Benefits (Government of Quebec)

Distributes a fixed monthly amount per child in the home based on the annual family revenue.

514 864-3873 or 1 800 667-9625

Revenue Quebec

Collects fees and taxes for the Government of Quebec:

514 873-2600 or 1 866 440-2500

Canada Customs and Revenue Agency

Collects fees and taxes for the Government of Canada.

1 800 959-7383







www.chezstella.org

