

MERCY CORPS ANTI-TRAFFICKING POLICY

A Guide to Understanding Mercy Corps Anti-Trafficking Policy

This document provides additional guidance around Mercy Corps policy focused on Anti-Trafficking and the Trafficking of Persons. This guide is not a replacement for the stated policy but instead highlights key issues that team members may encounter in their roles.

Consistent with its mission to alleviate poverty, suffering and oppression, Mercy Corps is committed to a work environment and operations that are free from human trafficking and exploitation. It's very simple—human trafficking and exploitation are completely contrary to the Mercy Corps mission.



View the Anti-Trafficking Policy in the Digital Library.



View the eLearning course in Talent Development at Talent.MercyCorps.org



As humanitarian workers we have a duty of care to do no harm. Mercy Corps **will not allow human trafficking or slavery** in any part of our global organization or with any of our partners. **Mercy Corps strictly prohibits** any team member or partners from engaging in conduct that contributes in any way to human trafficking.



If you have information concerning **human trafficking or exploitation**, you have choices of how to report the information. You can use the **Mercy Corps Integrity Hotline**, notify **Human Resources** or **tell a trusted leader**.



These types of allegations are very sensitive and Mercy Corps treats all information with the greatest respect for confidentiality. The safety, security and well-being of survivors is our first and foremost concern, along with the safety and security of the witnesses and accused.



Mercy Corps **will not tolerate** any form of retaliation against team members, partners or beneficiaries who report information about possible human trafficking.

THE FOLLOWING DEFINITIONS ARE IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND:

Trafficking in Persons:

The recruitment, transportation (to include return transport), transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by using threats or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, or abuse of power of a position of vulnerability or giving or receiving payments or benefits to achieve consent for purposes of exploitation.

Examples of trafficking could include, but are not limited to the following: engaging in sex acts for money, using forced labor, denying an employee access to identity documents, misleading or fraudulent recruiting practices involving wages, living conditions, job related costs, or hazardous nature of the work, recruiters not complying with local labor laws, recruitment fees, or failure to provide transportation at end of employment.

Exploitation: Includes at a minimum the exploitation of others (including sexual exploitation), forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or removal of organs. If someone is under the age of 18, recruitment, transportation, harboring or receipt for purposes of exploitation is considered trafficking in persons.

Examples of exploitation could include hiring domestic help and not paying them adequately, not providing appropriate living conditions, being involved in the exchange of sexual favors for money, food, shelter or protection.

REMEMBER!

mercy Corps.org/integrity-hotline
or
integrityhotline@mercy Corps.org



Policy Talk

QUESTIONS*

If I have suspicions about possible human trafficking, should I investigate to make sure I know exactly what is happening before I report my concerns? I don't want someone to get into trouble if I'm wrong or waste my supervisor's time.

A friend of mine who works for another aid organization told me a contractor approached him and said he would pay him \$50.00 (US) per person if he would drive a truck full of boys into another country. My friend said no but does not know what to do. We are thinking about confronting the contractor to tell him he is trafficking boys. What should we do?

Hiring a sex worker is not legal in my country but it happens all the time. If so many people are involved in it, why can't I do it?

Why is Mercy Corps focusing now on issues like sexual exploitation and human trafficking?

My neighbor asked me to allow children to stay in a room that is attached to my home in exchange for money. He says it will be a new group every month. They appear to be from another country but I would not be doing anything wrong because they are just staying at my house. Is that correct?

*All questions are hypothetical situations and are used as learning points.

...AND ANSWERS

It is important to report your concerns immediately so that the facts of the situation can be determined quickly. **Remember as a witness, your role is not to investigate, that will be done through an established process.** There may be an innocent explanation for the concerns you have and if so, no one will be in trouble and you will definitely not be wasting anyone's time.

This is definitely suspicious activity on the part of the contractor but you and your friend should not confront him. Report this situation to the Integrity Hotline, Human Resources or a trusted leader and advise your friend to do the same with his organization. Our Ethics Team will follow-up with this situation and ensure there is a proper investigation.

Mercy Corps does not judge sex workers and instead works to assist them when and where we can. The sex trade often involves trafficking, exploitation and/or abuse. By engaging with a sex worker a team member or partner would be supporting the activities discussed in this policy. **Mercy Corps prohibits any type of conduct involving sexual exploitation, abuse or trafficking.**

Mercy Corps has been working on protection and safeguarding issues for many years as part of the organization's duty of care. Unfortunately in the last few years there have been incidents in the international aid sector that demonstrated a need for a more intense and focused approach to these issues.

The situation described sounds suspicious and could involve the trafficking of persons. **This would not be acceptable behavior for a Mercy Corps team member.** When children (under 18) are trafficked, no violence or coercion needs to be involved. Simply bringing them into exploitative conditions (harboring them) constitutes trafficking. You need to report this situation immediately to Mercy Corps.

