

# PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

## INTRODUCTION

Child abuse and the child sex tourism is a very important aspect in the defence of children's rights and that is why we would like to formalise our commitment to children and their protection in written form.

The sexual exploitation and other forms of child abuse may take place in the tourist industry and, for this reason, it is important for us all to acknowledge the problem and take responsibility for it. To ensure that a child is not at risk in and around our hotel establishments, we need to make sure everyone is on board.

**This information examines how we can help to protect children's rights in our hotel and identify and report possible suspicious activities**

## COURSE CONTENT

- Why is this training necessary?
- What is a minor?
- Different forms of abuse and child exploitation.
- Scenarios where the alarm should be raised and suggested procedures
- Remember
- Conclusión

## Why is this training necessary?

Because we are socially responsible for protecting children's rights within our establishments, by preventing or stopping any (sexual) abuse to which they are subjected.

1. Perpetrators of this abuse may use the infrastructure of the tourist industry to commit their crimes:

- \* Premises of hotel establishments
- \* Golf courses
- \* Trips
- \* Taxis

2. Anyone of us, or any person working in the tourist industry, may happen to witness an act of child abuse (reception area, security, restaurant and room service, permanent staff, technicians, drivers)

**It is our obligation to "Identify and report"**

## What is a child?

Any human being under the age of eighteen (18)  
(UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)



# Different forms of child abuse

## To which forms of abuse are children subjected in the tourist industry?

- Physical abuse
- Verbal/emotional abuse
- Confinement
- Abandonment/neglect
- Working for adults.
- Prostitution
- sexual abuse
- Trafficking
- Pornograph

## Child abuse of family members, other guests, employees or visitors

### Physical abuse (examples)

- Raging anger and physical threats.
- Causing injuries to the child (e.g. bruising, cuts)
- In attempting to discipline the child, the adult becomes abusive.
- Inappropriate punishment in view of the age or physical condition of the child

### Verbal/emotional abuse (examples)

- Consternation and humiliation of a child
- Name calling or insults targeted at the minor
- Telling a child that he or she is "worthless", "is no good" or "a mistake"
- Frequent shouting, threats, bullying.
- Use of fear to control behaviour → the child is afraid of being struck.

## Child abuse of family members, other guests, employees or visitors

### Confinement

Children may be locked away in a room/space alone for an exceptionally prolonged period. They may be confined to this space without enough food, water or facilities.

Prolonged periods of confinement may lead to mental disorders, problems, high levels of stress and fear.

An increase in temperature (e.g. in a car) would endanger the child's well-being.

### Abandonment/neglect

This is a systematic failure to meet the child's basic needs, either in terms of suitable food, clothing, hygiene or supervision.

An underaged guardian may be physically or mentally unable to look after another child. (Excessive) alcohol and drug abuse may also be involved.

## Situation 1

You work in a hotel and you realize that one of the children of a particular family staying at the hotel is very anxious and wary of this/her guardians and has visible bruising on her/his arms.

### What would you do?

#### Suggested procedure

This may well be a case of child abuse, but as the child is not a citizen of the country, local child welfare agencies are unable to help. Nor is this course of action likely to be in the best interests of the child. What can you do?

- Inform the manager of the tourist establishment.
- The person who expressed the concern must report the specific events which led him/her to raise the alarm.
- The manager may ask the family if everything is OK and if there is a problem.
- The hotel manager contacts the tourist operator which organised the family's holiday.
- The tourist operator provides the contact details of the child protection agency of the child's country of origin and the family's home address

#### Child labour

*The term "child labour" is often defined as any work which denies children their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and which is harmful to their physical and mental development. Child labour involves work which harms children or prevents them from attending school.*

*(International Labour Organisation)*

#### It refers to work which

- Is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful for children.
- Interferes with their schooling in any of the following ways:
  - denies them the opportunity to attend school
  - obliges them to leave school prematurely
  - requires them to try to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy workloads.

## How many children are involved in child labour in the world?

It is estimated that **150 million** children are involved in child labour in the world. (Global database of UNICEF, 2014)

### OUR GUARANTEE

All our contracted employees are over the age of 18 (except when labour law permits the recruitment of minors over the age of 16 subject to the authorisation of their legal guardian).

### Situation 2

A child makes his/her way to the hotel facilities to sell souvenirs to the guests.

### What would you do?

#### Suggested procedure

Children that sell souvenirs are vulnerable to all kind of abuse and exploitation. They are often denied the chance to go to school and come from poor families. Remember that it is never the choice or fault of the child!

- Politely take the child to one side, out of the sight of customers/guests.
- Involve the hotel manager
- Explain to the child that this is not allowed on the premises of the hotel.
- Escort the child off the premises
- Report the incident to a local child protection organisation; perhaps they are aware of programmes which can help vulnerable children.
- Advise customers/guests not to buy anything from children selling products.
- Since they have been earning money, they have been denied the chance to go to school.
- Support child protection organisations which support poor families and help children to attend school.

### Child sex tourism

*Child sex tourism occurs when a person travels at home or abroad, and engages in sexual acts with a person under the age of eighteen. (ECPAT)*

The sexual exploitation of children is an illegal act. Remember that it is a crime punishable in the country where the abuse takes place, and in many perpetrators' countries of origin by virtue of extra-territorial laws.

### How many children are sexually exploited in the world?

It is estimated that **1.8 million** children are subjected to sexual exploitation in the world.  
(UNICEF)

### Situation 3

#### You work at reception

A foreign guest wants to bring a local adolescent to their hotel room.

#### What would you do?

#### Suggested procedure

- Politely ask the guest about the child.
- Ask to see the child's ID.
- Try to find out information about the child (possibly in the local language).
- If the child is under the age of 18, do not allow entry.
- Be polite but firm in your speech and body language.
- Explain the company policy in simple terms.
- Repeat the policy if there is any disagreement.

If necessary, show the guest where it is written.

- Do not be afraid or get nervous. It is a normal procedure.
- Inform the hotel manager. He/she will decide whether to inform the guest's tour operator and/or the local police force.

### Situation 4

#### You are a hotel employee

A guest has taken a lot of photos (of children) and other and other guests have even complained?

## What would you do?

### Suggested procedure

- Approach and ask the guest about their passion for photography and their interest in taking photos (of children)
- Explain that photographs may not be taken of children without the consent of the child's legal guardian.
- Note whether the guest allows you to look at the photos.
- If you suspect child pornography, speak to the hotel manager.

### Manager

- If the guest still refuses to show you the photos, inform the local authorities.

## Situation 5

### You are the manager

A guest resorts that he/she has seen a child entering the hotel room of another guest and he/she thinks that they are not related.

## What would you do?

### Suggested procedure 1

Make enquiries to clear up any suspicions, but make sure you notify the police if you suspect child abuse!

- Ask the guest to describe exactly what he/she saw, to explain why it was suspicious and to provide the room number.
- Explain the procedure to the guest.
- Make enquiries about the suspect at reception and ask the hotel staff if they have seen anything suspicious. If they have, call the police immediately (and schedule a future training programme about how to respond to any suspicions of child sex tourism)
- Go with another staff member to the room and make up an excuse to knock at the door. e.g. delivery of clean towels
- Try to take a look around the room.

## Suggested procedure 2

- If a child is in the room and appropriately dressed, explain the company policy with respect to children in hotel rooms, ask the child to show ID and ask questions about the child (preferably in the local language). If the child's parents are not present, explain that it is against the rules to bring a child to the hotel room in the absence of his/her parents, and escort the child out of the room. Try to find out how to contact the child's family. Report the incident to the police without filing a formal report related to the suspicion of child abuse.
- If a child is present and is not appropriately dressed, call the police immediately and escort the child to a safe place.
- If the guest does not allow you to look around the room and is acting suspiciously, anxiously, irritably or is not appropriately dressed, you should also call the police.

## Scenarios where the alarm should be raised

- Finding child pornography videos or photos in a guest's room.
- Finding evidence of child prostitution in the room.
- Guests enquiring about places where they can meet "young girls" or "young boys" (prostitution)
- Seeing a guest enter or leave the hotel with a child who was not with the guest upon arrival
- Seeing an adult guest with a child who has been mistreated (bruises, verbal/physical abuse)
- Receiving complaints from other guests about a guest's inappropriate behaviour towards children (spying, taking photographs, being overly affectionate)

## Standard notification procedures

- Something suspicious involving a child attracts your attention.
- Identify the situation and any people involved (what, how, who) gather evidence to support your suspicions
  - Identify accurately
- Ask and involve others (first your colleagues, only involve guests when it is absolutely necessary)
- Inform and involve the management.
- The management monitors (the management is responsible for monitoring the steps that must be taken)
- (If necessary) inform the local police and (local) child protection organisation
- Inform the tour operator
- Log and file the incident. Use it to improve procedures
- Add the issue of child protection to the agenda at least once a year.
  - Training / update



## Standard notification procedures

### Where should I raise the alarm?

- Local police or hotline (preferably domestic-based and specialising in children or treatment)
- Local child's rights NGO
- Via [www.reportchildsextourism.eu](http://www.reportchildsextourism.eu) you can directly inform the authorities of the suspect's country of origin.

### What kind of information should be reported?

The police need specific information before it can act!

- Location

## REMEMBER

- If you detect or suspect a case of child abuse, immediately inform the management so that they can act and call the police.
- Do not act alone. Ask a colleague for assistance.
- Explain to guests that you are applying mandatory internal procedures.
- Do not leave the child alone with the adult.
- Do not be afraid or get nervous. It is a normal procedure.

### **Thank you**

[www.reportchildsextourism.eu](http://www.reportchildsextourism.eu)

This training course has been developed in cooperation with ECPAT Netherlands.

