

Safety

Police interactions

Make a safety plan

- [How to Make an Arrest Safety Plan \(SWOP USA\)](#)
- Use your network of fellow sex workers.
 - Screen clients (see below)
 - Safety in numbers
 - Try to be out in the open if at all possible
 - Knowing the industry standards in your area (prices, marketing, scripts).
 - Get information about the areas you're going to be in. Learn about clients, other sex workers, and industry standards in that location if traveling.

Know community resources in your area

- [Cahoots](#)
- [Don't Call the Police](#)
- Hotlines
 - [Sex Work Outreach Project Community Support Line](#): 877-776-2004 (rape counseling & crisis intervention)
 - [Sex Workers Project](#) (legal resources): 646-602-5617

If you have to engage with police

Be very aware of how police view you due to your identities. Know that you will always be at risk and the police are never on your side. Every intersecting identity has another layer of consequence when it comes to the police.

If you are in physical danger

There are two sides to every coin, these situations can be tough because you never know how the police will react if you share that you're a sex worker. Assessing the temperature of where you are and how well you know the system there will provide you the insight you need in order to make the decision for the situation at hand. Your safety should be the first priority and you know what's best for you.

It may be best, especially if your life is threatened, to share all aspects of the situation in order to make sure details are collected, your mental and physical safety the first priority. It is possible that this information could be used against you later. To find a lawyer, contact the hotlines above.

Things to know when interacting with police ([Know your Rights](#))

- Don't talk to the police and don't let them in/answer the door

- Anything you say can and will be used against you and others, you can choose to say “I choose to remain silent”
- Never lie to cops but know that cops can and will lie to you
- You don’t need to tell them you’re a sex worker, you only need to tell them your name, address and date of birth
- Three phrases to use:
 - I choose to remain silent and I want a lawyer
 - Am I under arrest? Am I being detained? Am I free to go
 - I do not consent to this search
- Limit amount of “party favors” because it creates reasonable cause – specifically anything that has a strong smell
- Try to stay outside in a public area, especially if engaging in drug use
- Put money and sexual tools/materials in separate places

If you’ve been arrested

- [Know your rights](#)
- [Find a lawyer](#)

Vetting child/family/custody legal resources: how to vet lawyers

Unfortunately, because sex work is criminalized, many attorneys cannot promote that they support sex workers. To vet the right attorney and gain legal advice it is best to contact [The Sex Workers Project of the Urban Justice Center](#), a national organization that defends the human rights of sex workers by destigmatizing and decriminalizing people in the sex trades through FREE legal services, education, research, and policy advocacy. They aim to create a sexually liberated world where all workers have the autonomy and power to fully enjoy their human rights.

For information on the best lawyers to contact nationally call our Client & Community Services Rep, Abigail Anzalone at Aanzalone@urbanjustice.org or +1 646 459 3024

To understand your rights as a sex worker in the US, check out the [Sex Worker Safety toolkit](#).

If you need international legal support and knowledge about the laws in different countries contact the [Global Network of Sex Work Projects](#).

Screening clients

What is screening?

Screening clients, also known as vetting, is the process of collecting as much information about them as you can prior to meeting.

Why is screening helpful?

Screening helps keep you safer by arming you with more knowledge about the client you're meeting with.

When people have to be transparent, they're often more accountable and less likely to intentionally commit harm.

Most clients who are sincerely interested in meeting with me understand that. By employing these methods, I am both ensuring my safety and prioritizing discretion, and they are therefore happy to supply this information.

You may not be able to get them all but get as much information as you can. If the client declines, don't be discouraged, be relieved that you are aware of what they are willing to agree with and what they want. This informs the best decisions forward.

What information is important to collect?

It's often easier when connecting with clients online. Important information to have includes:

- Full legal name
- Phone number
- Place of employment
- Online profiles - Google them, try and find their facebook, LinkedIn, social media account - the more of a footprint they have online, the more likely it's a real person.
- References of previous dates your potential connection has had. Follow up with those people to ask whatever information helps you to feel safe
- ID

Screening, online

As a vulnerable population that [disproportionately experiences violence](#), sex workers regularly face the dilemma of whether their new special friend is going to turn out to be awful (and with much higher stakes).

Create a system for clients to contact you. A formal email, a form. Let them sell themselves to you – are they worthy of your time, energy, and skill?

Example: Screening is required for all new friends. I accept the following methods of verification (choose one):

- 2 provider references (links to her ad or site, and email), OR

- Employment Verification: Your full (real) name, the name of your employer, and your company email or direct phone number, OR
- If you're on [P411](#), you may contact me through my P411 profile.
- I accept Date-Check as part of my screening process.

Screening, in person

Although meeting someone in a public setting is not necessarily any safer and makes pre-screening more difficult, it also provides the opportunity to judge someone's mannerisms and demeanor upfront. Vibe checks like this are crucial – if you don't have a good gut feeling about someone, do not work with them.

Take your own transportation and have a safety call for support.

You can ask to meet in a public space or talk on the phone before going to a more private location. You can also assess the person for comfort or intoxication in person when you can't over email. Ask for ID

Once I have this info, what do I do with it?

Cross-examine profiles and info to check for inconsistencies and other red flags. You can also check this information against local bad date lists.

Use the phone number provided to schedule a call – it's often easier to do a vibe check when talking with someone or in person.

If you come upon a work email or phone number, make a discreet call to ensure the person actually works there. Some workers request work phone numbers, and arrange a discreet call to confirm.

Agreeing on the terms and conditions of the meeting beforehand will help you be able to stand firm in your boundaries and be a good screening tool. Get your money upfront and if you renegotiate those terms or services, renegotiate pricing.

What to do when it's weird.

If you feel like there is something that just feels wrong about this person, pay attention to that feeling. Don't talk yourself out of it. That feeling is self-protective.

Men workers

Screening/vetting aren't as common of a practice among masculine sex workers (trans and cis). A special consideration for transmasculine, masculine-of-center and non-binary sex workers can include disclosing to clients when/if you are transitioning as a safety measure or a way to make more money. Some clients may offer more for your services.

Survival work, special considerations

When doing survival sex work, it's often hard to navigate and maintain boundaries. Losing a client can mean the difference between dinner or shelter that night, or not. If you're in this situation, consider harm reduction approaches. Can you charge more for services you don't necessarily want to do, but that sell often? Can you change the type of services you're offering?

A Note on Community

Having a community of other workers is helpful for screening. Bad date lists, review sites, etc. are ways that sex workers communicate with each other. Word about a bad date spreads, other workers know who to avoid, everyone is safer.