

Starting Out: Independent Escorting



1800 458 752

sexworker@sexworker.org.au

Welcome to the Victorian sex industry!

This information is for people who are interested in or are currently full-service sex working within an independent setting. Independent workers set their own prices and are responsible for all the work and costs associated such as advertising, safer sex supplies or transport, unlike those who work with brothels or escort agencies.

Full-service sex work (FSSW) generally refers to a sex worker who has sex in-person with their client (commonly, covered genital/penetrative sex).

RhED would like to thank the sex workers that participated in the development of this resource and shared their insight and knowledge.

We acknowledge that not everyone's experience is going to be the same. If you need more information than this fact sheet provides, please call us, email or arrange an appointment for free, confidential support.

BEFORE YOU START

When starting in any new industry it's important to think about your goals and expectations. Within the sex industry it's important to also gain a clear understanding of what your personal boundaries and limits are.

Here are some pointers from other sex workers to consider when starting out:

- An understanding that your physical and mental health and safety is the most important consideration in any decision you make.
- Any job has specialised skills and knowledge. For sex work, an understanding of STIs and transmission, strong communication and negotiation skills, and an awareness of the different terminology within sex work is important to the job.
- Clear boundaries are important in the sex industry and you have the right to choose what you will and will not do with your body. After gaining an understanding of the different types of services and ways of working within the industry, consider what services fit within your comfortable boundaries and capabilities (both physical and mental).
- Do you prefer working by yourself or do you prefer the company of other workers? Unlike a brothel setting, independent workers usually work alone or in the company of only one other person, so it's important to think about what type of workplace suits you best.
- It's important to acknowledge that there is no guarantee you will make a lot of money. Consider what your financial needs are, what your spending budget is, and how you feel comfortable to market yourself to ensure you can make your desired amount of income. For example, what skills could you use to build rapport with your clients so that they become repeat customers and a regular income?

Working Legally

Each Australian state and territory has different legislation for sex work and advertising sexualised services. In Victoria, the Sex Work Act 1994, the Sex Work Regulations 2016 are currently being repealed following the passing of the Sex Work Decriminalisation Act 2022. Parts of these pieces of legislation will still be in place until December 2023, so please refer to RhED's Decriminalisation FAQs document for a more detailed outline of which sections of each piece of legislation still apply. Importantly, Victorian independent escorts have previously needed an SWA number to work, however from 10 May 2022 this is no longer required.

Outcalls Only

As an independent worker in Victoria, all forms of in-calls (where a client visits you in your home or booked accommodation) are illegal. To work legally you are required to provide outcalls (where you visit the client in their home, or have the client book a hotel/motel room in their name). We understand the issues and barriers this law creates, please contact RhED to discuss any concerns or questions further.

The legislation regarding in-calls will be changing no later than December 2023 when the second round of decriminalisation changes will take effect. When this occurs, private escorts will be able to provide incalls, including working from home, provided they comply with council regulations relating to operating a home business.

STIs and Safer Sex

Sex workers have always been at the forefront of safer sex practices. Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are not just something that affects sex workers' health, they can also result in reduced income. It is important for sex workers to be educated about the types of STIs that can affect them and their clients. Sex workers should also educate themselves about the symptoms of common STIs, while having an understanding that many STIs are asymptomatic and can only be diagnosed through regular screening.

Previously in Victoria, it was a legal requirement for sex workers to attend for STI screening every 3 months. While this is no longer a legal requirement, some sex workers might still choose to do this to maintain knowledge of their sexual health. Sex workers who work infrequently might decide to attend less regularly, while those who work often might have an STI screen conducted monthly. It is a good idea to discuss your ideal frequency of STI testing with your doctor or other sexual health worker. It is best practice to use condoms or dams for oral sex and all penetrative services. If a safer sex barrier fails, it is important to attend an STI screen to protect the health of yourself and others.

Online Advertising

From May 10 2022, advertising restrictions outlined in the Sex Work Act 1994 no longer apply to sex workers. This means that sex workers can outline specifics of their services (such as mutual oral, French kissing, rimming etc.) online. Specifying what services you provide in your advertising will help streamline the booking process and reduce misunderstandings with clients. Sex workers are also no longer restricted from including full-body nudes in their advertisements however should note that under the Online Safety Act 2021, have a responsibility to ensure people under the age of 18 can't access any sites they host if they contain restricted content.

Before you advertise, think about what your unique selling point is, and what types of clients you might like to work with. Consider what kind of experience you're offering and make sure your tone, language and photos match this. For example, if you are providing a slow, relaxed, and intimate service, taking photos in leather or latex might miscommunicate the tone of your service to clients. If you're feeling stuck, try looking at other independent worker's ads to see how they market themselves. Remembering that you want to have your own brand that fits you and that others have put significant effort into their own marketing to help them stand out.

Online Advertising

The online world is ever-changing and we will do our best to keep this list updated with options for you to advertise your online services. Please note, the platforms listed below are not representative of RhED endorsements. It's important to do your own research and make your own decisions about which platforms are best suited to your needs:

tryst.link/
ivysociete.com/
scarletblue.com.au/
availableangels.com.au/
escortsandbabes.com.au
werescorts.com.au
au.skokka.com/
realbabes.com.au/
dirtyplaybook.com.au/
escortify.com.au/
mayfairconfidential.com.au/
adultfinder.com.au/
penthouse.com.au/escorts/melbourne
escorts.punterplanet.com/advertise
myplaymate.com.au/escorts-melbourne
adultadsaustralia.com.au/
joyfinder.com.au/
locanto.com.au/Personals-Services/209/
naughtyads.com.au/
privategirls.com.au/
au.langtrees.com/
openadultdirectory.com/escorts/Australia/Melbourne/
crokor.com.au/adult-services
rentboyaustralia.com/
jock2go.eu/
melbourne-male-escorts.com/

Screening Clients

Before you meet up with a client for the first time, it is a good idea to check they are who they say they are, and find out whether other sex workers have had positive or negative experiences with them. There are a number of ways to go about this, and we recommend getting in touch with RhED on 1800 458 752 or at sexworker@sexworker.org.au so that we can talk you through them.

Deposits

Sometimes it can be difficult to determine whether a client is seeking to make a legitimate booking, or whether they are a 'time waster.' Requesting a deposit is a common way that independent escorts safeguard their time and money, and avoid no-show clients.

Each worker will have different preferences on how they accept deposits, and how much they ask for. Some workers will request a flat fee, while others will ask for a percentage of the overall booking cost. It is not advised to have the deposit transferred into your bank account, as this could compromise your privacy and safety. PayPal is also not advised, and comes with an added risk of the money being confiscated. Commonly, deposits are requested via the Beem It app (where you can choose any name to use) or cryptocurrency transfers. Some workers prefer to request that vouchers (such as Uber, Coles Myer, Visa etc.) are sent to their work email.

If a client is serious about booking you they will usually be prepared to pay a deposit, so if they refuse it could be a sign they won't go ahead with the booking.

What should you charge?

As an independent worker, what you decide to charge for your service is entirely up to you. As a starting point, try doing some online research to get an idea of what workers in your local area with similar services charge and how they block out booking times (e.g. 30 mins, 60 mins, two-hours etc).

Once you have your base rates worked out, you can use this to calculate other areas such as:

- Extras
- Travel expenses
- Overnight bookings

What to expect in a standard booking

The general industry-standard for full-service includes an intimate massage on the client, protected oral on the client and protected genital/penetrative intercourse. These are the most basic elements of a service; often a more intimate booking is described as a 'girlfriend experience' or 'boyfriend experience' (GFE or BFE) and may include oral on you, kissing, cuddling and conversation. Anything additional or specialised that you discuss with your client is considered an extra which you can price to what you are comfortable with. Looking at other workers' advertising to see the kinds of services that are available will help you come up with your own style and think about what you are comfortable with.

Client health checks

Checking your clients for visible signs of STIs is a standard part of the professional service you provide as a sex worker. An experienced client will expect it and if they are new to seeing sex workers this is an opportunity to educate them. Each worker has a different way of going about this, for example, some do a subtle check once they turn the client over after a massage. Others will do a more formal examination before the booking begins. A formal check before the client showers or urinates and performed in good lighting ensures that no tell-tale signs like scabs or discharge are washed away. Performing health checks can be awkward to begin with however clients respond to your confidence which will improve with practice.

The Scarlet Alliance Red Book is a great resource which includes a comprehensive list of STIs and other useful information: redbook.scarletalliance.org.au

Where to look

- Check the whole pubic area, the shaft and head of the penis/look between vaginal lips
- Pull back the foreskin to check for discharge
- Lift the balls and thoroughly check the area between the anus and penis
- Around the anal area
- Through the pubic hair

What to look for

- Sores, blisters, rashes, and warts
- Itching, redness, swollen glands, unpleasant odour
- Discharge
- Pubic lice
- Look over the mouth and lips for blisters and sores, especially if you are going to kiss your client

Note: pre-cum can look normal but it may still be infectious.

Be aware that some STIs do not have visible symptoms which is why it is safest to always use a condom or dental dam.

How to end a service

Working independently you will need to keep track of the time and manage the service within the timeframe of the booking. A playlist can be a handy way to keep track and setting an alarm will help the client be aware that their time with you is coming to an end, unless they choose to extend!

Wearing a watch can be a more discreet way of keeping time, you will find which ways work best for you as you get used to the rhythm of bookings.

Remember to account for how much time you need to wrap up a booking, e.g., showering for yourself or client and preparation before your next session.

How you end a service is important and it may be the difference between a client turning into a regular or not. Staying friendly right up until you say goodbye and ending with a line that may encourage them to rebook i.e. "I really enjoyed our time together" can leave your client feeling special and encourage them to become a regular.

Safety Tips

Working independently, you will often be on your own. While most clients are respectful it's important to always remain vigilant. Consider these tips below:

- Program your phone so that the pre-programmed number of an individual you trust is dialed when you press one button.
- Turn off your phone's Bluetooth, Air-drop and other sharing capabilities before going into a booking.
- If you are providing a service to a client at a private home, drive by the house first to check for signs that might suggest "all is not right". For example, if there are several cars in the driveway or you hear loud music coming from the house, or you see more than one person in or around the house. If you feel something is wrong ring the client on your mobile to discuss your concerns or to cancel the booking. When you enter the house, scan to check for other people, signs of danger and exits before starting the booking. You could say, "this is a lovely house, would you mind giving me a tour?" Or you could ask to go to the toilet and then have a quick look around.
- During your booking make sure that doors stay unlocked and you can remember the pathways to get to the front door.

- A good practice is to have a check-in buddy, make a call at the start of the booking, letting them know where you are and what time you will be done. This will let the client know that someone else knows where you are and that your whereabouts can be traced.
- Have a plan with your check-in buddy for what they will do if they can't get a hold of you, for example call the police.
- When the client pays, ensure they aren't watching and put the money in a safe place e.g. in an inner zipped pocket. Be aware of where your money is at all times.
- Don't accept a drink that has already been opened or that you have not seen being made.
- It can be easy to become relaxed if you are enjoying the booking or the client is a regular, remember to remain 'switched on', as it's possible for clients to take advantage of you or get the wrong idea if you aren't paying attention. For example, removal of a condom is unfortunately common, clients can take your money or try to find out personal details about you including from your wallet and personal phone.
- Have your belongings near the door so you can grab them if you need to get away quickly.

Ugly Mugs

A client who is disrespectful, dangerous or commits an offence against a sex worker is called an Ugly Mug. This can be; physical violence, sexual assault (including removal of condom without consent, known as stealthing), abusive behaviour — for example calling you insulting names, yelling, making threats, making harassing phone calls, forcing you to do something you don't want to do, non-payment of service etc.

The RhED Ugly Mugs program aims to alert sex workers of dangerous clients to prevent further violence and harassment. We provide a confidential and supportive reporting system for sex workers.

When you report, an Ugly Mug warning is created by RhED which details information about the incident and the mug.

Published warnings are sent to subscribers of the Ugly Mugs list, you can report and sign up here <https://sexworker.org.au/sex-workers/ugly-mugs/>.

Your name or any other identifying details will not be published. We can provide confidential interpreters at no cost to you. We can support you in a range of ways following an incident,

Contact RhED for more information

1800 458 752 or **sexworker@sexworker.org.au**

Common terminology used in the sex industry

Oral Sex/French	Protected sexual contact between the mouth and the genitals or anus.
\$ BBBJ (bareback blow job)	Performing unprotected oral sex on a client (consider increased risk of STIs).
Full Service	Service including sexual intercourse (a full service booking generally includes a massage, oral sex on client, and covered genital/penetrative intercourse until the client comes or their session is over).
Hand Relief	Hand stimulation of client's genitals until orgasm, (this is a common way to end a booking in a massage-only parlour).
** Rub n tug	Hand relief after a massage.
** Happy Ending / HJ	Hand relief after a massage.
\$ Natural	Sex without a condom (consider increased risk of STIs).
Massage	Touching and rubbing the client's body (usually with your hands).
** \$ Body Slide	Massage where sex worker slides their naked body up and down the client's body.
\$ Kissing	Generally, mouth to mouth contact.
\$ DFK (Deep French Kissing)	Open mouth kissing, including tongue.
\$ Strip	Erotic dance while removing clothes.
\$ Anal/Greek/A-Levels	Protected sexual contact between the mouth and the genitals or anus.
\$ GFE/BFE (girlfriend or boyfriend experience)	GFE or BFE usually refers to a more intimate type of service that involves more connection between the client and worker, and is less transactional or clinical. It might mean more kissing, cuddling, talking etc. Note: this does not include unprotected sex.
\$ PSE (porn star experience)	PSE offers clients the opportunity to play out fantasies often seen in porn. This might include acts such as dirty talk, spanking, gagging/deep throating, anal, swallowing ejaculate etc. Note: Activities are always pre-communicated and agreed on between the worker and client.
\$ Reverse oral/mutual oral	Oral sex that the client performs on the worker.
\$ Double	Client books two sex workers who both focus on the client, but aren't intimate with each other.
\$ Bi (bisexual) double	Client books two sex workers who are also intimate with each other as well as the client (resembles a threesome).
\$ BDSM	Bondage and Discipline, Dominance & Submission, Sadism and Masochism.
\$ Costumes/role play	Worker wears a costume and roleplays a character e.g. a nurse or a personal trainer.
\$ Italian	Rubbing genitals (usually a penis) between buttocks.
\$ Mutual French / 69	Worker and client perform oral sex on each other at the same time.
\$ Rimming	Licking the anus (with protection).
\$ Spanish / boob job	Rubbing genitals (usually a penis) between workers breasts.
\$ Toy show	Worker uses sex toys (e.g. vibrator) to masturbate themselves in front of client.
\$ Golden Shower	Client watches worker urinate, or one person urinates on the other.

\$ - Services that you can choose to do and charge the client your own rate directly as an extra.

****** - Usually specific to massage-only parlours

Peer Groups

Stigma, working alone, and not being out to friends and family can make sex work an isolating profession. However, there are spaces where sex workers come together to share information, laugh, debrief and support one another. Sex workers are one of the most supportive communities around so it's really worth looking in to how you can connect with others who share your experience. Outside of the social support that peer groups can offer, they are also a great way to source information and ask questions regarding just about anything relating to the sex industry! Consider reaching out to the three peer groups/organisations below and from here you will be able to learn about more online spaces that you can join to help you feel connected.

Red Files
RhED Red Rendezvous
Vixen

Visas

As long as you have the ability to work in Australia on your visa, it is legal to sex work in Victoria. If you need support with migration law, Department of Immigration and Citizenship or anything related to your visa, contact RhED directly.

Tips from Sex Workers

What can I say if they don't want to use a condom?

If you have a pushy client who doesn't want to use protection, consider some of the following solutions: If they argue they don't want to, or it doesn't feel as good:

- Try swapping who wears protection i.e. female condoms
- Suggest another activity such as Spanish sex (between the breasts) or hand relief with lubricant.
- Tell them any of assertively you never have unsafe sex and I am not going to start now.
- Ask them how they'd feel if all your clients were requesting this? Remind them it's for their own protection as well as your own
- Tell them they might think they don't like protected sex, but they've never tried it with you!
- Offer different styles of condoms (they all feel different – contact RhED for more information).
- Tell them you only enjoy sex with respectful people

Should I douche?

Douching is flushing the vagina or anus out with a fluid, usually water. For people with a vagina, the short answer is no. The vagina is a self-cleansing mechanism and douching is not recommended as it gets rid of the healthy bacteria that naturally occurs in the vagina.

Anal douching can interfere with the natural function of the bowel. While douching cleans out the rectum, it also flushes out the mucus layers that lubricate and protect the rectal/gut wall. With these protective layers gone, the douche fluid disrupts the lining of the intestinal walls leaving the rectum more vulnerable to infections such as HIV and other STIs.

Other assorted tips from sex workers

- Have friends outside of the industry as well as in the industry.
- Clients are paying for a service, not for your love or friendship. It is important to keep your personal life separate from your professional life. Some clients enjoy the thrill of finding out personal details of sex workers and can use them against them. Be mindful of how much you want to tell them. Many workers make up pseudo life stories while they're in the industry.
- This is your business, plan how it will work. Your body is your business, look after it.
- Be wary of who you choose to trust. People may take advantage of you, especially when they know how you are making your money.
- You choose how to spend your money.
- Do pelvic floor exercises, remember that fully relaxing your pelvic floor is as important as flexing it.

Remember

Sex work is real work. You are working in a legitimate industry in Victoria. You have the same human rights as anyone else.

Wellbeing

The benefits of exercise and enough rest are self-evident, though sometime difficult to achieve, especially with the irregular hours that come with working in the sex industry. The secret seems to be choosing a form of exercise which you enjoy. This will in turn improve your quality of sleep.

Have you thought about who you are going to tell?

It's important to have people that you can talk with about your experiences in the sex industry. However, it can also sometimes be important to get away from your work completely and be in a space where no one knows what you do for a living. Consider who you may and who you may not tell and how you believe they will react. Contact RhED if you'd like any tips or support.

If you don't think you'll stay in the industry forever, do you have a plan for life after sex work?

Due to stigma and structural discrimination, some sex workers have reported difficulty moving on from sex work. Issues they have experienced include a lack of options, gaps in work history and difficulty in finding an alternative that offers the same flexibility or income. This is perpetuated by the stigma of sex work, and lack of understanding of transferrable skills sex work provides. RhED has a program called Pathways designed to help workers navigate these issues.

Information about how RhED can support you

RhED is a sex worker program in Victoria, supporting current and former sex workers. RhED is a program of Star Health and is staffed by people who have worked, or are working in the industry, and allies.

RhED maintains strict confidentiality and privacy around all issues and contacts with sex workers.

RhED provide:

Health education, information, support, referrals to sex worker-friendly services (such as accountants, GPs and counsellors) and advocacy to people who work in the sex industry. We do this by telephone, outreach and email.

Professional development workshops to sex workers who are starting out in the industry, working in the industry and just wanting to refresh skills. Some of our topics include working with disability, tax and finance, BDSM and kink, STIs and sexual health knowledge. If you have an idea for a workshop you'd like to see please reach out and let us know!

A free industry **magazine (RED)** twice yearly. This is circulated to all brothels and individuals who wish to subscribe. Subscription is free and if you would to receive copies, please forward your name and postal address. Your name can be "The Occupier" and the magazine is delivered in a plain envelope.

A social group called **Red Rendezvous** meets on the last Wednesday of the month. Email and SMS reminders are sent the week prior. If you would like to be part of this, let us know. Usually 2-3 people turn up and often these are new workers, current workers or people who have left the industry and use it as a way of staying connected.

A weekly drop-in space called Hustling to Health (H2H). This runs from 5:00pm - 9:00pm every Friday at 36 Greeves Street, St Kilda. Here workers can connect, get support, free dinner, shower, tea, coffee, clothing and safer sex/NSP supplies.

A weekly drop-in space at **St Kilda Gatehouse** on a Wednesday between 12pm - 5pm for workers to grab supplies, ask for referrals and information, or just have a chat.

An **Ugly Mug** reporting system. This is for reporting and warning system about dangerous, violent or nuisance clients or sex workers in Victoria. If you have any further questions, feel free to give us a call on 1800 458 752.