

MoDot remains in human trafficking battle

**(KAIR)--January is National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, with the national awareness day held January 11.**

**The Missouri Department of Transportation is joining the effort, working to spread word of the month, which is dedicated to raising awareness of human trafficking and educating individuals on how to stop this crime.**

**A release from MoDot explains that the transportation agency is involved through its "Put the Brakes on Human Trafficking" campaign because Missouri is a transportation hub for the United States, with large amounts of freight moving across the state- highways every day. Common places like rest stops, gas stations, convenient stores and hotels are prime spots for the practice of human trafficking. According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, there were 240 human trafficking cases reported in Missouri in 2021, involving 327 victims. Nationally, these numbers jump to over 10,000 cases involving over 16,000 victims.**

**In 2018, MoDOT Director Patrick McKenna signed the Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking pledge, joining efforts with other transportation leaders across the country, with a commitment to providing what the release calls "specialized training to employees on how to identify the common indicators of human trafficking and what to do when trafficking is suspected in Missouri."**

**Some warning signs of a potential trafficking situation are outlined in the release, which says such signs include indications of physical abuse, signs of branding tattoos, not in possession of their money or identification, body language indicating they don't want to be there or seem uncomfortable, lack of eye contact with anyone except their trafficker, or not allowed to speak for self.**

**If you suspect someone is being forced to engage in any activity from which they can't leave—whether it is commercial sex, housework, farm work or other activity—call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or text BeFree (233733). Information is available online at [humantraffickinghotline.org](http://humantraffickinghotline.org). Please save the National Human Trafficking Hotline number as a contact in your cellphone: 1-888-373-7888. If someone is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1.**