

Post title

Northern Territory Sex Work Laws

Rich text

Sex work laws are different in each state and territory of Australia. This guide focuses on laws about providing in-person sexual services in the Northern Territory. If you have questions about these laws or your specific situation, contact [SWOP NT](#).

In the Northern Territory, sex work is **decriminalised**. In short, this means:

- It is **legal** for a person over 18 to provide sexual services to a person 18 years or over.
- [Sex workers and sex work businesses are subject to the same laws](#) that 'apply to all individuals and businesses generally, including laws governing employment, occupational health and safety, workers compensation and rehabilitation, planning, taxation and discrimination.'
- There are location restrictions for sex work businesses and home-based sex work businesses.

Image (for now)

Type of sex work	Legal status
Private work (incalls)	Legal. Location restrictions for home occupations may apply.
Private work (outcalls)	Legal.
Establishment work (brothels etc.)	Legal. Location restrictions may apply. Operators may require a suitability certificate.
Street-based sex work	Legal.

All sex work is decriminalised in the Northern Territory. If you have any issues with police about doing sex work in any space you are choosing to work from, contact [SWOP NT](#).

Accordion (Post FAQs)

Accordion 1: Brothels, escort agencies, and erotic massage premises

Sex work businesses are **legal** in the Northern Territory .

Sex work businesses are regulated by the [NT Planning Scheme](#) (see 5.5.14 Sex Services-Commercial Premises)

- Sex services businesses can operate in both commercial and industrial zones

- Sex services businesses cannot be directly next door to or opposite an existing kindergarten, school, childcare centre or place of worship.
- Sex services businesses that were operating *before* decriminalisation are considered to be compliant with the NT Planning Scheme.

Sex work businesses are regulated by [NT Worksafe](#).

Operators (owners and/or managers) of sex services businesses with three or more sex workers must have a '[suitability certificate](#)'.

The practice of sex work businesses fining workers (e.g. for lateness or a single missed shift) is likely **illegal** in the NT. If this happens to you, contact [SWOP NT](#) for advice and action.

Accordion 2: Private sex work - incall and outcall

Private sex work (also known as independent sex work) is **legal**. Sex workers can offer both incalls and outcalls.

- 1 or 2 sex workers may operate a 'sex services home based business' from residential premises, if they both live there (see [NT Planning Scheme](#) part 5.4.10.2).
- Sex services home-based businesses cannot be directly next door to or opposite an existing kindergarten, school, childcare centre or place of worship.
- Sex services home-based businesses can employ one other person as support staff.
- Private sex workers can also work from hotels, motels etc. Location restrictions do not apply if working from these premises.

Accordion 3: Street-based and outdoor work

Street-based and outdoor sex work is **legal**. Laws about public order apply.

Accordion 4: Workplace health and safety and safer sex

[NT Worksafe](#) regulates sex work businesses in the Northern Territory.

[Read: Work Health and Safety Guidelines for Sex Workers and Sex Work Businesses in the Northern Territory.](#)

- [Operators of sex work businesses and sex workers must](#) 'take all reasonable steps to adopt and promote safe sex practices.'
- Sex work businesses must provide safer sex personal protective equipment (PPE) to sex workers free of charge.

Accordion 5: Anti-Discrimination

- [It's illegal to discriminate against anyone because of sex work](#) - including current workers, past workers, and people assumed to be sex workers.

- All sex workers are protected from discrimination - including full service workers, sexual massage providers, online sex workers, people who do sex for favours, strippers and porn performers.

Accordion 6: Fraud, non-payment for services and 'stealthing'

It is illegal for a person to make "a false representation or otherwise [act] fraudulently" if their actions result in a person doing, or continuing to do sex work.

This section likely captures:

- A boss tricking a worker into doing sex work
- A client not paying for services, but leading a sex worker to believe that they did;
- A client sneakily removing or not using a condom without a sex worker's knowledge or consent (often called 'stealthing'). 'Stealthing' is a form of sexual assault.

Accordion 7: Payment in 'dangerous drugs'

It is illegal for a person to supply, or offer to supply, a dangerous drug in exchange for sex work services. 'Dangerous drug,' means any drug listed in Schedules 1 or 2 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1990 (NT).

Accordion 8: Advertising

- It is illegal for sex services businesses to advertise job vacancies for sex workers
- It is illegal to publish advertising that does not comply with the **Sex Industry Regulations 2020**. These regulations currently only apply to newspaper advertising.

Sex work advertising is also subject to:

- Federal advertising and internet laws
- Terms and conditions set by private advertising providers (e.g. newspapers or advertising websites).

Image (for now)

Offence	Maximum Penalty
<u>Intimidating</u> , assaulting or threatening someone into doing sex work Forcing someone to do sex work by damaging or threatening to damage their property	5 years imprisonment
<u>Intimidating</u> , assaulting, threatening or coercing someone to hand over their earnings made from sex work	5 years imprisonment
<u>asking or allowing a person under the age of 18 to perform sex work</u>	Up to 14 years imprisonment

asking or allowing a person under the age of 18 to work in a sex services business receiving payment from a person under the age of 18 doing sex work receiving sexual services from a person under the age of 18	
Saying or implying to a potential client that a sex worker has had a sexual health test to 'induce' them into receiving services.	20 penalty unit fine (\$3,780)

Related posts

[Full Decriminalisation of Sex Work in Australia Briefing Paper](#)

[In NT, sex workers, our family and associates finally receive protection for discrimination against us, our work and our identity](#)

[Scarlet Alliance and SWOP NT Joint Submission on the Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Amendment Bill 2022 Exposure Draft](#)

Offence	Maximum Penalty
- Intimidating, assaulting or threatening someone into doing sex work - Forcing someone to do sex work by damaging or threatening to damage their property	5 years imprisonment
Intimidating, assaulting, threatening or coercing someone to hand over their earnings made from sex work	5 years imprisonment
- asking or allowing a person under the age of 18 to perform sex work - asking or allowing a person under the age of 18 to work in a sex services business - receiving payment from a person under the age of 18 doing sex work - receiving sexual services from a person under the age of 18	Up to 14 years imprisonment
Saying or implying to a potential client that a sex worker has had a sexual health test to 'induce' them into receiving services.	20 penalty unit fine (\$3,780)