



NORTHERN CALIFORNIA COALITION TO SAFEGUARD COMMUNITIES

Press Release

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Subject: Cold Weather Arrives with Harvest Season

As the nights get colder and trimming season kicks into full gear, many workers on illicit cannabis grows are being forced to stay on-site in unsafe, makeshift housing without proper heating.

According to a [recent investigation by the Los Angeles Times](#), several laborers in Northern California have died from carbon monoxide poisoning and propane heater CO₂ exposure. These workers were living and working in sealed greenhouses or remote camps while trying to stay warm.

With trimming and harvest operations under way, the recent cold weather means the risk increases. This is a human trafficking concern and a worker safety concern. People being forced to live and work in these conditions are vulnerable and often unable to call for help.

This year, Norcal Coalition investigations on local illicit cannabis grows have already revealed unpermitted living quarters and the use of propane heaters inside closed structures. These deadly conditions are preventable, but only when unsafe sites are reported. Community tips allow investigators to locate victims and shut down dangerous operations before someone is harmed.

What you can do

If you see something that doesn't look right, *please report it*.

Call the Norcal Coalition Anonymous Tip Line at **1-707-441-3031** or visit norcalcoalition.org to report an online tip.

The Norcal Coalition is a partnership of five Northern California sheriff's offices, district attorneys, investigators, and victim services working together to combat human trafficking and illicit cannabis operations across Humboldt, Lake, Mendocino, Siskiyou, and Trinity counties.

Signs to watch for

Here are some common indicators of possible victim presence or illicit grow worker exploitation in public or along your road:

- People living or sleeping in greenhouses, sheds, or vehicles with no proper heat, running water, or bathrooms
- Workers looking cold, exhausted, not dressed for the cold weather, or wearing the same clothing day after day as they come and go from a vehicle or structure
- Propane tanks, gas heaters, or generators running inside tents or greenhouse structures with doors or flaps closed
- Bright greenhouse lighting that runs all night along with constant generator noise, even if the

cannabis grow looks shut down

- Individuals who appear stuck on site, unable to speak freely, unsure of where they are, or who seem afraid to leave or talk
- Workers being transported in large groups in vehicles that drop off at remote driveways or dirt roads, especially very early in the morning or late at night
- People walking long distances on rural roads carrying food, fuel, or water when no nearby homes or camps are visible
- Neighbors reporting trash piles, chemical smells, strong fuel odors, or constant traffic in and out of a secluded property

If you are in a position to do so, taking a photo or writing down vehicle information or physical descriptions can go a long way. Please stay observant, your call could help save someone who has no other way out.

To stay up to date with Norcal Coalition operations and public safety news, visit:

<https://norcalcoalition.org/news-flash>