

IMB Red Flags

Overview

Illegal massage businesses (IMBs) are successful in part because they operate in plain sight alongside other everyday businesses, with spa-like names that lend a veneer of legitimacy. This allows owners and sex buyers to maintain plausible deniability for their illegal activities.

Red Flags:

Below are indicators of an IMB and can help differentiate them from legitimate businesses.

- **Hours are often late** – often past regular business hours; even Google will reflect odd or late hours; **For example**, 9am-9pm, 7 days a week
- **Clientele is almost exclusively male**
- **Entrances are private and windows are covered**
- **High security measures** – external cameras at entrances; screened entry with buyers needing to call or be buzzed in
- **Cash heavy transactions** – a lot of cash present onsite
- **Incorrect or missing licenses** – if licenses exist, they are likely fraudulent
- **Evidence of sexual activity** to include condoms and lingerie
- **Living onsite** – evidence that women are living on-premises, including makeshift kitchens
- **Illicit advertising online** – often a simple Google search of the phone number affiliated with an IMB reveals salacious online ads that show its true nature.
- **Sex buyer activity** on online review sites
- **Business registration and on-paper ownership information changes frequently** to avoid detection, despite the beneficial owners remaining unchanged.