



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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DOH WARNS RESTAURANTS ABOUT POSTER SCAM

HONOLULU — The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) is warning all restaurant and other food establishment owners to beware of a letter alerting them of a new State and Federal Food Code requiring them to purchase and post approved hand washing signs. The letter is from a company called “Hawaii Food Service Compliance Center”, and has been received by food establishments in Hawaii and other states. The Hawaii Food Service Compliance Center is NOT affiliated with any state or federal agency. The DOH does not require posting of hand washing signs and provides these signs free of charge.

The DOH has been distributing free hand wash posters and probe thermometers to all permitted facilities as part of “Food Safety Awareness Month” in September. Business owners may also create their own hand wash signs if they choose. The DOH does not require that food establishments post these signs.

The Department does require that all food establishment owners and managers have their employees wash their hands frequently, especially prior to beginning work, before handling food, after using the restroom, and anytime they contaminate their hands. Food establishments in Hawaii are required to have readily accessible sinks restricted for hand washing only, and must always have an adequate supply of soap and single use towels available for employee use.

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The letter to food service establishments is intimidating and uses the threat of \$2,500 fines and suspensions or revocations of their food establishment permits if they don't immediately post signs at their hand wash sinks. These statements are not true. The letter solicits the purchase of "Hand Washing Posters" and contains an order form listing "Hawaii Food Service Compliance Center" at a Bishop Street address. The order forms ask for credit card numbers and expiration dates.

Most of the information contained in the letter is untrue, but like any scam, it contains enough truth to make it believable and gives the appearance of being an official document. This behavior is predatory and the DOH has notified the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs and the Attorney Generals Office of this criminal activity.

For more information, food establishments can contact the Department of Health at the following numbers:

Oahu Sanitation Branch..... 586-8000
Oahu Food and Drug Branch..... 586-4725
Hilo District Health Office 933-0917
Kona District Health Office..... 322-1507
Maui District Health Office 984-8230
Kauai District Health Office 241-3323

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For more information, contact:
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