



Placer County Health and Human Services Department

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Restaurants Urged to be on Guard

Health officials in Placer County are warning restaurant owners about a North America-wide phone scam. Callers are posing as health officials trying to get businesses to schedule inspections of their premises that never take place. It is not yet clear what the purpose of the fraudulent calls is or even who is getting scammed.

Jill Pahl, Director of Environmental Health, describes the scam this way:

- The fake official calls up a restaurant threatening to fine the establishment unless the owner books a health inspection.
- The caller advises the restaurant owner that a subsequent automated call will provide them with a numeric code that they should write down.
- Shortly after they get the automated call, another person calls who says they are from the Health Department and asks for the numeric code.
- The fake health official advises the restaurant to set up an in-person inspection and threatens to fine the establishment if it doesn't co-operate.

To protect yourself from this fraudulent practice, remember:

- The Placer County Environmental Health Division only conducts unannounced inspections. Environmental Health never calls in advance to schedule this kind of inspection. Call Sheriff's dispatch if someone comes to your site without proper identification.
- No new Environmental Health inspections procedure has been developed. Any caller identifying him/herself as a "health inspector" asking you to participate in a "code" process is part of a fraud scheme.
- Staff of Placer County Environmental Health, and any legitimate governmental agency, will always have proper identification. Ask to see proper ID if you have any doubts about the authenticity of an inspector visiting your business.
- Never give out personal or business identification information over the phone unless you are certain of the identity of the person you are speaking to.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our office at (530)745-2300.