

Food From Unpermitted Food Vendors Pose A Health Risk

Be Safe—Protect Your Families' Health

The Division of Environmental Health works hard to protect the public from the unseen dangers associated with improper food handling and cross contamination. Preventing foodborne illness is our main objective. But we can't do it alone! We want to increase public awareness about the dangers of purchasing and consuming food sold from unpermitted vendors.

What Is Unpermitted Vending

Unpermitted food vendors are those vendors that do not obtain a permit from the Division of Environmental Health and operate openly or covertly in a manner that compromises food safety. These operations are usually found outdoors, in vacant lots, on street corners or roaming door to door through neighborhoods. Sometimes the vending takes place on an outdoor table, open food preparation cart, shopping carts, ice chests, or out of the trunk of a vehicle. The following health concerns are commonly associated with unpermitted vending:

- Food stored directly on the ground
- Little or no protection from contaminants
- No restrooms
- No refrigeration
- Food from unapproved source
- No potable water
- No handwashing
- No food safety training for employees

There is an elevated risk for illness to be transmitted through food sold in this manner. The vendors do not have access to restrooms and resume their food preparation activities without washing their hands. Garbage, debris and discarded food are allowed to accumulate on the ground adding to the sanitation problems generated by this activity.

Many customers view the roadside food vendors as a convenient food purchase. They often do not understand the risks associated with eating food prepared by unpermitted vendors. Some may assume that the vendors actually are licensed and inspected by the Environmental Health Division. It is our hope that the public will gain a clearer view of the dangers associated with these unpermitted vending operations as well as understand what key components to look for to make sure the food they are buying is from a safe, permitted source that is routinely inspected by the Division of Environmental Health.

What To Look For

The Division of Environmental Health urges everyone to look for the placard or sticker before buying food from vendors. The placard and sticker indicates the vendor has been inspected and is aware of proper health and safety practices.

Placard



Sticker



If you see an unpermitted vendor in the same location more than once, call 311 to report it. It is important to include the time of day and specific address for the location where the vendor can be found.

Remember: Look for a Sacramento County placard or sticker. If in doubt, keep walking. It is not worth the risk!