
Press Release

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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BURLCO RESTAURANTS WARNED OF CURRENT SCAM

Scam Artists Reportedly Posing as Health Officials

The Burlington County Health Department is warning consumers and businesses again about a potential scam involving the Burlington County Health Department, the New Jersey State Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) and several other local Health Departments throughout the State.

The Health Department is again receiving complaints from local businesses about this scam. The first reports of the scam came back in the Fall of 2010 when NJDHSS' Food and Drug Safety Program received calls from local Health Departments and restaurant operators reporting that individuals have been telephoning restaurants and identifying themselves as either State or County health inspectors.

The imposters claim to be investigating complaints of foodborne illnesses and ask to schedule an inspection for some time that day or the next day, and often request personal information, including bank account numbers.

"As soon as a caller starts asking probing questions about finances, or seem otherwise out-of-the-ordinary, a red flag should go up," said Freeholder Mary Ann O'Brien. "The fact that the restaurant owner is even receiving a phone call regarding inspections makes it immediately suspect."

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PRESS RELEASE: Restaurant Scam – 3/15/11 – Add One

It has been reported that the caller(s) have identified themselves apparently using different aliases and provide a telephone number at which they say they can be reached. However, the telephone number is non-working. To date, no restaurants have reported that they had been visited by the callers.

Businesses and residents are advised that the Burlington County Health Department or the NJDHSS do not perform announced inspections nor do they call any establishment to request account information of the business.

If an employee receives a call from someone claiming to be a representative from the Health Department or other governmental body inquiring about account information for the business, no information should be given to the caller, get as much information as possible from the caller and then hang up and call your local law enforcement agency.

In addition, instances of alleged fraud should also be reported to the Burlington County Office Consumer Affairs office at 609-265-5054. Businesses and residents are advised not to provide any account information over the phone until they confirm the validity of such requests with Kathleen Holmes at the Health Department during business hours of 8AM -5 PM Monday through Friday at 609-265-5521.

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