



News Release

Cathy Wolfe
District One
Sandra Romero
District Two
Karen Valenzuela
District Three

Creating Solutions for Our Future

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Friday, July 2, 2010

Contact: Sammy Berg, Senior Environmental Health Specialist, 360-867-2667

(Editors Please Note: Mr. Berg will be checking this line over the holiday weekend and it is the best way to contact him should you want more information.)

Restaurant Health Inspection Scam Hits Thurston County

OLYMPIA – A telephone scam, which has hit several Western Washington counties, has now surfaced in Thurston County. Restaurants in several states and Canada have been hit with the fraud which comes in via phone calls.

The scam typically involves one or more calls in which a person claims to be a health inspector, calling to set up an in-person restaurant inspection. The caller may seek business information and/or personal information about people who work in the restaurant. In at least one call, the scam artist threatened a major fine unless the restaurant cooperated. The phony inspector scheme may be part of a larger fraud in which the information gathered is used in illegal activity involving an auction service.

Sammy Berg, Senior Environmental Health Specialist with the Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department says restaurant owners and employees should know that such phone calls are not part of a bonafide health inspection program. “Thurston County Health does not call ahead before an inspection. In addition, we certainly would not ask for personal information if we DID contact a restaurant by phone.” Berg says anyone who has doubts about the legitimacy of a phone call in Thurston County should hang up and call the Health Department at 360-867-2667.

Restaurants who receive such fraudulent phone calls are also encouraged to call the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-382-4357 or the Washington State Consumer Protection Agency at 1-800-551-4636.

