



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 14, 2011**

### **Health district advises food operators about fraudulent health inspectors**

**LAS VEGAS** – The Southern Nevada Health District is advising restaurant and other food service operators that it has received reports about fraudulent health inspectors contacting establishments to schedule an inspection. The fraudulent inspectors sometimes visit the facilities directly. Some fraudulent inspectors request personal information from staff or business owners. This activity has been identified in several states in addition to Nevada. Food service operators who have questions regarding inspection services, should contact the environmental health division, (702) 759-0588.

Routine inspections are unannounced and are conducted by registered environmental health specialists. Every health district staff member carries appropriate photo identification. The health district's environmental health specialists will not call to schedule a routine inspection. Environmental health specialists do not collect fees or accept payments or cash and they do not endorse or sell products.

In addition, environmental health specialists will not ask for social security numbers, credit card information or other personal information. However, employees of all food establishments must have a valid health card that can be shown upon request to a health inspector during an inspection.

"We have received calls intermittently from food service operators asking about health inspectors who are calling local establishments to schedule inspections. While we cannot say if the number has increased here, we received information that it is continuing to happen across the country," said Glenn Savage, director of environmental health. "We are not certain how this scam is working, but it's important to know that our staff will not ask for personal information. We encourage operators to contact us if they are not certain about someone who is claiming to be an inspector."

According to the health district, the complaints include calls to locally owned ethnic restaurants as well as fast-food chain restaurants. The callers typically ask for the owner's name, cell phone number, email account addresses, social security numbers, and birth dates. The caller also gives a time and date when the restaurant facility can expect the inspector to arrive for an inspection.

The Southern Nevada Health District's environmental health division oversees the plan review and inspection programs for food and beverage establishments. Each of the more than 17,100 permitted food establishments is inspected at least once each year and more if it is deemed necessary. In 2010, the staff conducted more than 24,000 routine inspections.

Updated information about the Southern Nevada Health District can be found on Facebook [www.facebook.com/SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict](http://www.facebook.com/SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict), on YouTube [www.youtube.com/SNHealthDistrict](http://www.youtube.com/SNHealthDistrict) or Twitter [www.twitter.com/SNHInfo](http://www.twitter.com/SNHInfo).