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Michigan Dept. of Agriculture Warns Food Establishments of Phony Inspector Scam

Fake food inspectors threatening fines, enforcement actions

LANSING – The Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) and local health departments are warning the state’s 56,000 food establishments about a scam involving fake food inspectors who are currently making the rounds in Michigan.

MDA, Michigan’s local health departments, and other agencies across the United States are reporting that restaurants are receiving calls from individuals claiming to be from a health department and requesting to schedule an inspection at the establishment as well as requesting sensitive information.

“State and local food inspections are typically unannounced to ensure proper food safety measures are always being adhered to and it’s rare an inspector would schedule a visit in advance. Additionally, we never ask for sensitive, confidential financial information from an owner,” said Keith Creagh, MDA Director. “It is completely unacceptable for imposters to threaten or attempt to intimidate Michigan’s food establishments and we will be working with law enforcement officials to address it.”

Here are some quick tips, so you don’t fall victim to this scam:

- Ask for identification if someone stops by or calls claiming to be from the local health department, MDA, or federal food agencies that you don’t know.
- If the individual can not provide proper identification, do not allow the person access to your facility. Contact your food regulatory agency immediately and report it.
- Never provide sensitive or confidential information over the phone such as a social security number. State and local food inspectors would never ask for that information.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your food regulatory agency or MDA. MDA can be reached toll-free at 800-292-3939.

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