



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Hawaii Department of Health fines Koha Oriental Foods \$100,000 for operating a food warehouse without a permit

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) Sanitation Branch has issued a Notice of Violation and Order to Koha Oriental Foods for operating a food storage warehouse facility without a state permit from November 2015 to August 2016. The facility, located at 94-150 Leokane St. in Waipahu had been used to store frozen seafood, among other products, for sale and distribution. The company is ordered to pay an administrative penalty of \$100,000 for the violation and may request a hearing to contest the order.

DOH discovered the unpermitted food warehouse in late August 2016 as part of its Hepatitis A outbreak investigation on Oahu. At that time, it was determined the warehouse had been operating from October 2015 without a state food establishment permit as required by Hawaii Administrative Rules Title 11 Chapter 50-3. After becoming aware of the violation, Koha Oriental Foods immediately applied for and received a legal permit.

Food establishments in Hawaii that fail to obtain required state health department permits are subject to fines of up to \$1,000 per day for each violation.

“In this case, when determining the monetary penalty amount, we considered the lower risk factors involved in operating a static frozen food storage facility where food is not prepared and directly handled by the employees,” said Peter Oshiro, chief of the DOH Sanitation Branch. “Operating without a permit is a serious matter, and under state rules the company could have been fined nearly \$300,000 for conducting business operations at the facility without a permit for almost a year.”

The DOH Sanitation Branch protects and promotes the health of Hawaii residents and visitors through regulation of food establishments and education of food industry workers statewide. The branch conducts routine health inspections of food establishments where food products are prepared, manufactured, stored, distributed, or sold. The branch also investigates the sources of food borne illnesses and potential adulteration of food products; and is charged with mitigating foodborne outbreaks and/or the prevention of future occurrences. Health inspectors

work with business owners, food service workers, and the food industry to ensure safe food preparation practices and sanitary conditions. The public may access food establishment health inspection results online at <http://hi.healthinspections.us/hawaii/>. For more information on the department's Sanitation Branch go to <http://health.hawaii.gov/san/>.

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