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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RESIDENTS WARNED ABOUT ILLEGAL ROADSIDE FRUIT VENDORS

HANFORD - The Kings County Department of Public Health reports an increasing problem with unlicensed individuals selling fruit cocktails on street corners. These vendors do not have the required health permits and their products are not considered safe for consumption. The public is urged not to buy from these vendors.

Typically, they operate from a folding table and sell cut up fruit in plastic cups. The Health Department has learned that the fruit is usually cut up in private homes or in the back of a van. Groups of people are picked up in Los Angeles and other cities and are simply dropped off for the day at various locations in Kings County and elsewhere in the valley.

Keith Winkler, the Department's Environmental Health Services Director, explained that their food handling practices do not meet even minimal standards of sanitation. The fruit sellers have no access to either toilet or handwashing facilities. The lack of personal hygiene, dirty cutting utensils, lack of refrigeration, lack of protection from contamination by dirt and flies coupled with transportation in unsuitable vehicles can easily lead to contamination of the cut fruit. Eating the fruit carries a risk of foodborne illness. He added that all approved food vendors display a permit issued by the Department of Public Health.

The Department is working with other valley counties, as well as Los Angeles County, to identify and prosecute those individuals that are behind this illegal activity.

Residents are asked to help by reporting the location of roadside fruit cocktail vendors to the Department's Division of Environmental Health Services by calling 584-1411.

Photos of illegal cut fruit vending in Kings County

