Indiana State Department of Health
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To: Indiana Retail Food Establishment Operators

Through: Local Health Departments

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Subject: Recognition and Verification of Food Safety Inspection Officers (FSIO)

Food facility operators need to be aware and informed about the possibility of individuals impersonating an FSIO and unlawfully entering their facility. These individuals may request to schedule an inspection of the premise, request detailed business and personal information from the owner/operator, and may request a return phone call to confirm the personal information through the use of a unique code number. Throughout the country, including Indiana, there have been reports of imposters extorting money and acquiring personal information from food facility operators. The purpose of this information bulletin is to make you aware of your rights as a retail food facility operator as well as to instruct you how to recognize a legitimate FSIO.

Under the Retail Food Establishment Sanitation Requirements 410 IAC 7-24-108(a):
"After the regulatory authority presents official credentials and expresses an intent to conduct an inspection, investigation, or to collect food samples, the person-in-charge shall allow the regulatory authority to determine if the retail food establishment is in compliance with this rule by allowing access to the establishment…"

An FSIO should have with them at all times a valid ID and business card.

If you are approached by someone claiming to be an FSIO and you feel they may not be an employee of the regulatory agency they claim, take the following steps to ensure that they are not an imposter:

- Ask for a valid photo ID and/or business card that show they work for the regulatory agency they claim.
- Contact the local health department and/or Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) to verify that they are a current employee. The Food Protection Program at ISDH may be reached at (317) 233-7360.
- If the individual is not able to provide a valid photo ID and/or a business card and the regulatory agency cannot confirm that they are a current employee, **contact the local law enforcement agency**.

The impersonation of a public officer is a criminal offense. Anyone found impersonating a health inspector or any government employee is guilty of a felony crime.

Under no circumstances should a food facility operator give money to an FSIO employee outside of the regulatory agency facility. All fees are collected either through billing or collected at the agency office. If an FSIO ever demands cash on site during an inspection, immediately become suspicious and contact the regulatory agency or local law enforcement.

If you have any further questions regarding identification of FSIOs or retail food facility enforcement contact your local health department or ISDH at (317) 233-7360.