

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

District Stresses Importance of Using Permitted Caterers/Food Vendors

Food from non-permitted vendor sickens 20 people at a recent family gathering

(Las Vegas, Nev., - June 23, 2005) – The Clark County Health District is stressing the importance of using permitted caterers and food vendors after 20 people became ill recently after consuming food prepared by a non-licensed caterer. High levels of harmful bacteria associated with improper food handling were detected in the meal served by the caterer. All of the affected people have since recovered from their illness.

“Although most foodborne illness is mild, some forms are quite severe and can be deadly,” said Dr. Donald Kwalick, chief health officer. “To protect your health and minimize the chance of food poisoning, use only permitted caterers and vendors that have been trained in proper commercial food preparation and handling,” said Kwalick.

To determine whether a caterer is reputable and permitted, follow these steps:

- Make sure the caterer has a valid health permit issued by the Clark County Health District, and a valid business license that indicates a physical business address within the county.
- Make sure the food is prepared in a permitted facility, such as a restaurant or commercial kitchen.
- Make sure equipment such as Sterno (cooking fuel), chafing dishes and portable refrigerators are used at the serving site to keep foods at the proper temperature.
- Make sure anyone employed by the catering company to handle food is in possession of a valid food handler health card issued by the health district.

For additional information on foodborne illness or to check the status of a catering company’s health permit, contact the Clark County Health District Environmental Health Division at (702) 383-1251.

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