



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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STATE ANNOUNCES NEW EMERGENCY HOMELESS FOOD RULE

Honolulu – Lt. Governor James R. “Duke” Aiona, Jr. and Health Director Chiyome Fukino, M.D. today announced a new initiative to help groups and organizations prepare food for individuals and families who are homeless. Beginning today, the state is providing an exemption from Department of Health (DOH) food preparation permit requirements for groups when they prepare and serve food that will be provided at no cost to those who are homeless.

“For many homeless families and individuals, getting enough to eat is a daily struggle,” said Lt. Governor Aiona. “Many organizations, helping those who are homeless, have asked our administration to provide the exemptions needed for them to prepare hot meals for families and individuals facing difficult times. We are very pleased to make that possible. The emergency homeless food rule exemption is part of our overall effort to work with the community to provide support and services that will help homeless families and individuals become self-sufficient.”

The new emergency food rule exempts kitchens and serving venues, when used only for feeding the homeless for free, from DOH food establishment permit requirements. The rule goes into effect today following Governor Linda Lingle’s signature this morning, and stays in effect for 120 days. A permanent administrative rule change is also being sought, and the DOH expects to go to public hearing next month after the required 30-days public notice.

“DOH sanitation rules are essential to protect the public from illness, but we also realize that they can be an obstacle for organizations that want to prepare food for those without a place to

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live, sleep, cook and the means to purchase food,” Health Director Fukino said.

DOH will be working closely with organizations that wish to use the new emergency homeless food rule and will provide free food safety training and information to those groups. The permit exemptions apply to kitchens when used only to prepare food for the homeless at no cost. Mixed-use kitchens still require a permit, but the DOH will give priority to reviewing and evaluating permit requests that include free food services for the homeless and other uses.

DOH sanitation rules cover all retail and wholesale places that store, prepare, serve, manufacture, package, transport or otherwise handle food. Current rules cover all food that is served or provided to the public, with or without charge, whether consumed on or off the premises.

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