



## Perris News

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### Street Vendor Roundup Yields Results

The City's crackdown on illegal street vendors is having the desired effect.

Perris Code Compliance officers cited nearly a dozen unlicensed vendors selling everything from corn-on-the-cob to carne asada to shoes in an enforcement program that began a month ago.

Vendors operating outside City ordinances seem to have gotten the message.

During one sweep through the City on a recent Thursday night, officers Joe Kircher and Shane Hidey found only one unauthorized vendor, issued \$100 citation and warned the couple selling carne asada and warned them that if they returned again, the pair would seize their cart, cooking stoves and tables.

"Nobody's out, I guess that's good," Kircher said.

City staff, the City Council and Perris Police agree that illegal vending poses health and safety risks to the public.

Most unauthorized vendors lack adequate food preparation and storage facilities, fail to properly sanitize cooking and serving locations and many do not have proper health cards. Code enforcement officials said some of the food they have confiscated was obviously spoiled.

"I am pleased that our efforts to protect Perris residents from unsanitary food and unauthorized vendors are working," said Perris City Councilman Al Landers. "We take public safety in our City very seriously. It's just not safe to buy and consume food from vendors who ignore our health and safety requirements."

Landers added that unauthorized vendors don't pay taxes the City is entitled to collect.

"They take away from the tax base and that's not fair," he said. "They hurt the merchants who pay those fees. City Councilwoman Joanne Evans agreed that unauthorized vendors undermine legitimate food sellers who pay business license and permit fees and sales tax revenue.

"There is a right way and a wrong way to conduct business," Evans said. "Operating unlicensed pushcarts undercuts the people who play by the rules."

Kircher and Hidey began their recent night prowling for unauthorized vendors by checking out a tip that several people were selling shoes, toys and knick-knacks from the back of a pickup near Perris Boulevard and Nuevo Road. The pair pulled up to the location, spotted the truck and determined the vendors had a county, but no City permit. They shut them down. Since it was their first encounter with those particular vendors and they were not selling perishable food, the City code enforcement officers let them off with a warning.

Then it was off to Harley Knox Boulevard on the City's north end, a hotbed of activity for unlicensed merchants. Code officers reported receiving complaints that several vendors routinely set up shop there and turn the location into veritable swap meet for unauthorized selling. But on this night, just one vendor prepared to set up shop selling carne asada.

Hidey and Kircher put a stop to that, writing a \$100 citation after discovering the operators had no business permits. Had the vendor actually been selling food, they would have confiscated their equipment. Repeat offenders face fines up to \$500.

Later, the pair swung through Rotary Park on the City's south end, but found no signs of illegal vending. Same results when they patrolled Metz Park, Paragon Park and Enchanted Heights. As part of the City's crackdown on illegal vending, Code Compliance officers are working nights and weekends.

"This is a problem that comes and goes in waves," Hidey said. "It will stay away for a while, then come back."

The carts seized by City officials are stored at the Public Works Yard. Most are never retrieved. The operators usually are hired by owners who live out of the area, so the carts remain in City custody until they can be disposed.

City officials say they are pleased with the results of Code Compliance officers so far but want the stepped-up enforcement to continue.

"We've got to keep up our efforts," said City Councilman Mark Yarbrough. "There are no more important responsibilities than protecting our residents' health and safety."



Perris Code Compliance Officer Shane Hidey writes a citation for an illegal street vendor.



Perris Code Compliance Officer Joe Kircher displays some of the condiments from the unauthorized vending stand. Such condiments often are stored in the open without proper sanitary conditions.



Perris Code Compliance Officer Joe Kircher at the Public Works Yard, where confiscated carts are held.