

LOUISIANA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 3, 2008

Department of Health and Hospitals News Update

**Food Inspections Underway in Hurricane Affected Areas
State Sanitarians Inspecting Restaurants and Grocery Stores**

BATON ROUGE -- In the wake of Hurricane Gustav, registered sanitarians from the Department of Health and Hospitals-Office of Public Health (DHH-OPH) are moving across the state inspecting restaurants and grocery stores. The goal of these inspections is to make sure that power outages and damage to restaurants and grocery stores does not affect food quality.

Assistant Secretary for DHH-OPH, M. Rony Francois, MD, MSPH, Ph.D., says that over the next week, sanitarians are expected to look at restaurants and grocery stores in areas that were hit by the hurricane and lost power. "We're not only inspecting food at these businesses, we also want to make sure the refrigerators and freezers are working properly so consumers do not receive spoiled food from these establishments," said Dr. Francois.

Sanitarians will look for signs of food spoilage and make sure refrigerators and freezers are maintaining proper temperatures. They will also check for structural damage to buildings. More than 40,000 businesses operate under permits from DHH-OPH, including restaurants, grocery stores, seafood processors and wholesalers, food and drug warehouses, milk and dairy plants, schools, day cares, nursing homes, hospitals and jails.

Businesses or consumers with questions concerning reopening procedures are encouraged to call sanitarians at their local parish health units. These phone numbers can be found at <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/offices/?ID=223>.

For the latest on Hurricane Gustav, you can visit emergency.louisiana.gov or call the state's emergency hotline at 1-866-288-2484 to listen to a recorded message with the most up-to-date information.