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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DIPATTAMENTON SALUT PUPBLEKO YAN SETBISION SUSIAT



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PRESS RELEASE

Village Sanitation Complaints to be Addressed by the Mayors

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Effective immediately, the Division of Environmental Health (DEH) of the Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) will forward all public nuisance complaints regarding village sanitation (i.e., foul smell, littering, rodents, poultry and livestock) that are received by DEH to the respective village mayor to address and resolve.

Through the authorization granted to island mayors via Title 5 GCA, Chapter 40, along with additional authority given by P.L. 14-027, each mayor is empowered to conduct the "removal of public nuisance and debris" and "issue a warning."

The referral of public nuisance complaints to the mayors has been made necessary as DEH is directing more of its resources into conducting sanitation inspections of health-regulated establishments, such as retail food facilities, food manufacturers, childcare facilities, school cafeterias, cosmetic establishments, and temporary workforce housings. More specifically, the Division's primary focus will be those establishments that service high-risk population, such as the young, sick, and the elderly.

DEH is required to inspect all health-regulated establishments (HRE) at least once every three months, which equates to 12,000 sanitation inspections a year. This does not include complaints, pre-operational inspections of new establishments, follow-up compliance inspections of HREs, disease outbreak investigations, and village sanitation inspections, all of which can easily add another 500 inspections a year. Coupled with other environmental health programs, such as consumer commodities and mosquito control, DEH will not be able to fulfil the inspection mandate; however, it will continue to conduct as many inspections of restaurants and other establishments as its resources permit, and the referral of village sanitation complaints to the mayors will assist in that endeavor.

DPHSS apologizes for the inconvenience this may cause to the mayors and their constituents, but DEH's present situation forces us to prioritize the Division's services. As resources permit, and the need arises, the DEH will attempt to assist the village mayors in addressing complaints that they are unable to resolve independently.

For information and inquiries, contact the Division of Environmental Health at 735-7221.

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