



NEWS RELEASE

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Unlicensed Activity Sting by BEAR Team Nets More Than 26 in Fresno

Businesses and subcontractors ordered to register or face fines

FRESNO – On July 15th and 16th, the Department of Consumer Affairs' Bureau of Electronic Appliance Repair (BEAR) conducted a sting from a private Fresno home targeting unlicensed activity, and especially businesses that BEAR had previously warned about operating outside California law.

BEAR inspectors invited 36 businesses over two days, and issued 26 citations and one notice to appear. In addition, one individual who had his license revoked by BEAR showed up and is now the subject of further investigation. BEAR was joined in the effort by Fresno County District Attorney's Office Investigators and Fresno Police.

"We can't emphasize enough how important it is for consumers to check the licenses or registrations of the people they hire before inviting them into their homes or accepting their services," said BEAR Chief Rick Fong. "In the case of computer repairs, identity theft is a concern because computer files often contain personal information."

Electronic and appliance repair shops are required to be registered in California. Licensure helps to ensure fair practices for consumers and gives consumers a means to seek redress if they have problems with a licensee.

Unlicensed Activity Sting by BEAR Team Nets Violators in Fresno

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Using the services of an unregistered electronic appliance service and repair business is a bad idea for several reasons. For example, in the event of a dispute, BEAR may not be able to locate the business in order to intercede on behalf of the consumer. Also, some unregistered businesses may not be honest, and consumers run the risk of having their property stolen.

The sting was held at the home of a consumer volunteer. BEAR operatives set up appointments with service and repair dealers they believed were unlicensed that they found in various sources, such as internet directories, Craig's List, newspapers and other publications. The dealers were invited to service either a computer, a refrigerator or a television that BEAR set up in the home for the purpose of the sting.

When each of the technicians arrived, they were informed they were in violation of the law. BEAR warned each that they must take steps to register with BEAR within 15 days or face administrative fines of at least \$250. The fine can be as high as \$1,500 under some circumstances.

It is vital that consumers check the licenses and registrations of any electronic or appliance repair businesses they hire. Consumers can verify licenses by visiting our Inquire Before You Hire Web site at www.InquireBeforeYouHire.ca.gov or by calling DCA's Consumer Information Center at 1-(800)-952-5210.

To report any unlicensed activity please call 877.STOP ULA (877.786.7852) or visit www.InquireBeforeYouHire.ca.gov for more information.

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