

Rodent droppings, permit problems shut down SLO County Food Bank warehouse

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It turns out a permit issue wasn't the only thing to blame for a temporary shutdown of the Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo's warehouse.

Rodent droppings and "unsanitary conditions" were also discovered.

When the Department of Public Health inspected the facility on Nov. 27, they found "evidence of rodent droppings at locations throughout our warehouse," in addition to the facility having an expired Processed Food Registration, CEO Kevin Drabinski said in a statement. He added that the Food Bank had filled out the paperwork to renew the permit and submitted it to the state in mid-October.

"Due to unsanitary conditions, all food within the facility is embargoed, and no new food can be moved into the facility until sanitary conditions have been restored," the Department of Public

Health said in a separate statement. The Public Health statement also mentioned that at the time of the inspection, the Food Bank wasn't operating with a valid Processed Food Registration.

Drabinski said the Food Bank has prepared a corrective action plan that it will present to Public Health officials at a meeting on Wednesday. The plan will address pest control efforts as well as the expired Processed Food Registration and a remedy for a malfunctioning hot water circulation pump, Drabinski said.

The Food Bank is expected to receive a written determination from Public Health regarding its plan "sometime after our meeting," Drabinski said.

Since the closure, the Food Bank's pest control contractor has inspected the building and the Food Bank has agreed to all of the recommendations, Drabinski said. Additionally, the entire warehouse floor has been industrially cleaned.

In the meantime, the Food Bank's trucks are still permitted to collect and distribute food, so the organization is coordinating with its 107 agency partners to keep operations flowing as smoothly as possible, Drabinski said. He said the Food Bank expects to complete 60 percent of its scheduled distributions this week.

Any food that arrives at the warehouse will be taken to agency partners, Drabinski said.

"We want the community to know that we are taking immediate action to resolve any issues and to reopen the warehouse as soon as possible," Drabinski said.