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## No favours for VANOC from health authority

By Bob Mackin, SUN MEDIA

VANCOUVER- There will be no special treatment for concession stands at 2010 Winter Olympics venues, says Vancouver Coastal Health authority's Olympic planning chairman.

"We'll be treating VANOC venues like any restaurant," said regional health protection director Nick Losito. "If it's not meeting the requirements of the regulations and there is an imminent health risk, we will close it down."

Losito spoke Friday at the 2010 Games-themed spring meeting of the B.C. Environmental and Occupational Health Research Network.

Losito said 30 to 50 restaurants a year are suspended or closed permanently in Metro Vancouver for a variety of reasons, including poor food handling practices, dirty kitchens and pests. VCH is planning 18-hour daily coverage of Games venues and the athletes' villages in Vancouver and Whistler next February.

Losito said the IOC mandates signs listing nutritional content and potential allergens at athletes' cafeterias. Similar signage will be posted in public areas at Games venues.

Inspections will also occur at off-site restaurants, bars, hotels and temporary set-ups hosting Games-time promotion and hospitality events.

Food safety isn't VCH's only Games duty. It is also charged with overseeing injury and disease monitoring and response, anti-smoking enforcement, air and water quality and health emergency management.

"We're absorbing the costs and working within our budgets which are constrained at best," said Losito. Seventy-five environmental health officers will be working nine-hour shifts throughout the Games and reporting from the field to VANOC, the IOC medical office and the VCH website with wifi-enabled tablet computers.

Cigarette and cigar smoking is banned on Games' sites, except for coaches and officials who can puff away "in a very obscure area, back of house, well away from where it's going to impact on people."

Electric ice cleaning equipment provided by Olympia means a decrease in indoor emissions at hockey, curling and skating venues. Losito said the only area of concern outdoors may be the Sea-to-Sky corridor where the massive increase in motorcoach traffic for the Games' transportation system could increase diesel particulate.

VCH will also enhance monitoring of hotel pools and spas from January to March 2010.

Losito said VCH will use the Games to promote handwashing to control flu transmission and campaigns to stop the spread of bed bugs and the phase out of trans fat cooking oils.

VCH is collaborating with Fraser Health Authority, Health Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada and the Department of National Defence, which is erecting six temporary wilderness camps for soldiers.