



State of California—Health and Human Services Agency  
**California Department of Public Health**



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.  
Governor

August 17, 2012

**VENDOR ALERT 2012 - 14**

TO: ALL WIC VENDORS  
SUBJECT: COUNTERFEIT OR ALTERED FOOD INSTRUMENTS

**Purpose**

The California Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program has become aware of the circulation of counterfeit or altered food instruments (FI). Vendors must pay attention to the information presented on the WIC FI to prevent a financial loss by accepting a counterfeit or altered FI.

**Background**

Counterfeit or altered FIs that look similar to a valid WIC FI have been presented at vendor store locations. The supplemental food identified on the counterfeit FIs is for infant formula, but could indicate any WIC supplemental food.

**Vendor Responsibility and FI Handling**

It is important that the vendor verify the authenticity of the FI prior to accepting it as payment for WIC supplemental foods. The vendor should follow the procedures for accepting FIs by:

1. Request the signed WIC Identification Folder (WIF) from the WIC shopper
2. Ask for the FIs being used for the transaction
3. Make sure all the FIs are valid
4. Total the WIC foods separately by FI
5. Enter the exact purchase price of the FI
6. Ask the WIC shopper to sign each WIC FI
7. Compare the WIC shopper's signature on the WIC FI with the signature on the WIF
8. Give the WIF back to the WIC shopper

Ensuring you follow the proper FI handling techniques helps protect you from financial loss by accepting a counterfeit or altered FI.

**Verify FI Submissions**

Vendors are encouraged to verify the acceptance of submitted FIs prior to depositing the FI into your bank. Counterfeit or altered FIs will not be reimbursed by the WIC Program and returned checks may be subject to bank fees.



Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program  
3901 Lennane Drive, MS 8600, Sacramento, CA 95834  
P O Box 997375, MS 8600, Sacramento, CA 95899-7375  
(916) 928-8500 Internet Address: [www.wicworks.ca.gov](http://www.wicworks.ca.gov)

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**Possession of  
Counterfeit or  
Altered WIC FIs**

If you come into possession of a suspected counterfeit or altered FI report it to the WIC Program immediately at [WICABUSE@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:WICABUSE@cdph.ca.gov).

Vendors are also encouraged to send in the original FI to the WIC Program by mail:

California WIC Program  
Vendor Management Branch  
Attention: Clyde Steele, Chief  
3901 Lennane Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95834

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**Resources**

- For proper FI handling techniques review the Cashier's Training tool located at:  
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Documents/WIC%20Transaction%20%20Easy%20Steps.pdf>
  - For instructions on how to verify the FI submission on VIWIX:  
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Documents/WIC-Grocer-VendorNews-VWIX-SerialNoEntryInstr.pdf>
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**Questions**

If you have any questions, please contact your Vendor Consultant or call toll free (855) WIC-STOR or (855) 942-7867. You can also contact the WIC Vendor Management Branch by email: [WICVENDORINFO@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:WICVENDORINFO@cdph.ca.gov).

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Clyde R. Steele, Chief  
Vendor Management Branch  
California WIC Program