

Peeing Peanut Vendor Gets Second Chance -- But Fails Inspection

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Poor Mohammed Shirajul Islam, the peanut vendor who had his license revoked for leaving his cart to run to the bathroom, got a special chance to have his license reinstated yesterday -- and failed his re-inspection.

Mohammed, whose case has drawn much press attention, was invited by the Department of Health to have his cart reinspected and his permit returned -- but, acting deputy commissioner for environmental health Daniel Kass tells us, he failed to bring the necessary food-handling utensils and notice from his garage. Kass also says the cart was "dirty" and had a non-functioning burner, which also figured in its failing grade.

The Street Vendor Project of the Urban Justice Center, which held yesterday's rally for Mohammed, claims that the DOH didn't tell Mohammed he had to have the utensils and letter for the inspection. Its director Sean Basinski further claims he was at the inspection and the cart was "spotless."

Kass disputes this. "Our rules are really clear," he says. "When they get an inspection, they know what to bring... that's part of food safety. That's common practice."

Kass also says they made special arrangements to review Mohammed's cart because there was no one available to inspect it at the Maspeth center where it would normally be seen.

"I feel for the guy, but our job is to protect the health of the people who buy the food," says Kass. "He can come back with a clean, fully-appointed cart, and we'll be delighted to get him back out on the street."