

Shopkeepers warned against selling spoilt fruits, vegetables

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Coimbatore: Days after finding a shop on Karuppa Gounder Street selling more than 300kg spoilt fruits, the food safety department has warned fruit and vegetable shops not to store spoilt fruits and keep stocks at the right temperature.

The department has formed teams to inspect and instruct fruit and vegetable sellers to ensure that the produce is fit for consumption and not artificially-ripened. "We had called many fruit and vegetable dealers for a meeting and issued notices to all firms on March 16 to ensure that they stock goods at the right temperature and sell it only during its shelf life. We also instructed them not to artificially ripen products using carbide or other chemicals," designated food safety officer A Vijayalalithambigai said. "However, after finding shops selling spoilt fruits, we have formed teams to inspect and instruct sellers again over the next few days."

Sellers and shopkeepers have been instructed to not have spoilt goods in their premises. "Last week, shopkeepers told us that the spoilt fruits were kept behind the shops for it to be returned to the wholesaler or picked up for disposal. They also claimed that the fruits were damaged when they arrived. But we can't keep checking if shopkeepers return it or just mix it with new stock and keeps it again for sale," Vijayalalithambigai said.

The move comes after the officials, who raided shops on Big Bazaar Street and Karuppa Gounder Street to check for fruits artificially ripened with carbide, found 300kg spoilt fruits including mangoes, oranges, sweet lime and pomegranate.