



AARON MORRISON — Staff photos

Police warn vendors about toy gun sales

■ Meeting with ice cream sellers follows complaint to Hayward City Council

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HAYWARD — Local mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts and uncles can rest easier knowing that ice cream truck vendors have agreed, at the request of Hayward law enforcement, to stop selling imitation firearms from their trucks.

On Thursday, Hayward police Chief Lloyd Lowe and about 20 local ice cream truck vendors met at the Police Department to discuss issues within their industry. The main message: The sale of toy guns in Hayward has to stop.



ICE CREAM

TRUCK

drivers (left) attend a meeting with Hayward police Chief Lloyd Lowe on Thursday in Hayward to discuss recent complaints about realistic toy guns, such as UK Arms's air soft Gun model m777 (shown above), which was sold to Hayward resident Patti White's son from an ice cream truck. Upon a request from Lowe, the vendors agreed to stop selling toy guns to children in Hayward.

Please see **GUNS**, News 7

MONDAY, July 30, 2007

Vendors warned against selling toy guns

► **GUNS**, from News 1

"I don't know how many of your trucks sell those," Lowe said. "But that absolutely needs to stop. I want to give you the opportunity to clean up your own industry."

A little before 10 a.m. on Thursday, several vendors gathered in the parking lot of the police department and then filed into a conference room on the second floor to hear Lowe.

"It's important that you guys are sensitive to community needs in the areas that you service," Lowe said. "And if you are going to continue to do it, we're going to take steps to make sure that that sort of stuff isn't sold to our children."

Along with toy guns, Lowe asked that vendors not carry candy-filled hand grenades, plastic handcuffs or other potentially harmful items that have been sold from ice cream trucks.

One man then explained that before the meeting many of the vendors present had already stopped selling toy guns.

Lakhsbir Singh of Hayward owns Hayward Wholesale Ice Cream and restocks ice cream trucks for many of the vendors present at Thursday's meeting. He interpreted Lowe's remarks into Hindi because of the language barrier for most of the vendors.

"That's the reason why I bring everyone here, to not sell anything," Singh told Lowe. "If I said it to them, they are not going to understand. But they now see that this is what you said. We want to hear whatever the law says, so we can follow the law."

Singh's company allows about 30 to 35 trucks to park on his lot. His company

does not sell the vendors toy guns when they come to restock, but many of them can get toy guns elsewhere, Singh said.

Recent complaints about toy guns came to the attention of Hayward police by way of a City Hall meeting where Starletta Carter of Hayward complained that her 6-year-old son, Parris Rosemon, purchased a worryingly real-looking toy gun from an ice cream truck.

Her son purchased the toy for \$2 outside their apartment building on Tyrrell Avenue. She found it under his bed while cleaning his room.

"We have about five trucks that come down our streets daily," Carter told City Council members, city staff and Hayward Mayor Mike Sweeney more than two weeks ago. "We don't think this is appropriate."

The City Council, city staff, Sweeney and Lowe all agreed with Carter, prompting the meeting with vendors.

Patti White of Hayward said her mother confiscated a toy gun with its package from her son after he purchased it from an ice cream truck.

According to a representative of UK Arms, whose brand was on the package, White's son did not purchase a mere toy.

"We mark it on the box that you have to sell it to people 18 and up," said Lily Chen, sales manager for Dong Ying Trading Inc., over the phone. "We make the warning very clear on the merchandise."

Dong Ying Trading Inc., based in Southern California, is a wholesaler of imitation weapons, among other things, for sporting goods retailers in the U.S.

"It is (a vendor's) responsibility to not sell it to kids," Chen said.

Chen also affirmed that the company complies with all federal regulations for imitation firearms.

Under the "Marking of Toy, Look-alike and Imitation Firearms" regulations, federal law stipulates that all imitation firearms bear the approved marking, namely a "blaze orange" color on the barrel's exterior.

When Carter discovered her son's toy gun without the standard marking, she feared the worst. Carter believed her son was able to easily remove the marking.

"Ultimately it's going to be one of the police officers that winds up killing our kids," Carter said. "They won't be able to determine what's real and what's fake, or if this is a kid."

During the meeting with vendors, Lowe also warned that vendors without valid driver's licenses risk having their truck impounded for 30 days.

Sgt. Corey Quinn of the traffic division reminded the vendors of regulations that require ice cream trucks to park at a curb before selling anything. This, he said, can reduce the risk of accidents involving pedestrians.

Officials from the business license department in the city's revenue division were also at the meeting to help vendors who might have been operating without proper paperwork.

As for Carter, she was delighted to hear that the city had taken her concerns seriously.

"I appreciate all the support," Carter said on Friday. "Our kids are going to be a lot safer."

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