

Work continues to target SF brothels

SF Chronicle – City Insider

Massage parlor owners and their landlords may start getting letters in the mail from the city if codes are violated on their property, according to San Francisco Police Capt. Al Pardini, head of the city's vice squad.

Masseuses who wear lingerie or who don't have legitimate permits to practice massage run afoul of city codes, as do those who are convicted for soliciting money for sex. The latter is hard to prove and rarely ends in a conviction, however.

Health Department officials have said in recent months that they know of more than 50 city-licensed establishments where they suspect sex is traded for money. But they feel like their hands are tied by lack of enforcement power and money.

The longstanding problem has largely gone unabated by city officials. It also relates to the city's history as a sex-trafficking hub where women are forced into prostitution.

In January, a Chronicle investigation highlighted the number of known illegal massage parlors. Several weeks later, a police bust in the Sunset District revealed a prostitution den fronting as a health club half a block from an elementary school.

Pardini has had discussions over the past few weeks with Sunset-area **Supervisor Carmen Chu**, Mayor Gavin Newsom's Office, and the city's Department of Public Health about the issue.

Pardini said that if the letters are sent they could help put massage business owners and landlords on notice that the city is aware of the illegal activity. That might make it easier for the city to enforce the codes and shut illegal parlors, he said.

"The notice gives a clear record that they have been warned," Pardini said. "It's a due process issue."

Posted By: [Robert Selna](#) | February 24 2009 at 01:12 PM

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