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	SECTIONS	11 MY SAVED	
NEWS	METRO		Q
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LOTTERY	OBITUARIES		
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City shutters two Dorchester auto shops

Inspectors cite list of violations

By Matt Rocheleau | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT JUNE 11, 2013

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City inspectors have shut down two Dorchester auto-repair shops after finding numerous environmental and safety hazards, expired and missing permits, and code violations. Authorities say they believe an illegal makeshift sleeping quarter behind one of the businesses was being used for prostitution.

Officials shut down El Auto Repair at 1325 Dorchester Ave., where a box spring and mattress were found inside a small wooden structure covered by a blue tarp and dismantled by city workers, said according to the Inspectional Services Department.

Sandman Auto Body Shop at 210 Washington St. was also shut down by the city.

A stop-work order was placed on both properties until all code violations have been corrected and proper permits obtained, city officials said.

Violations reportedly found at both shops included improper storage of flammable materials; excessive garbage, trash, and debris; outdated permits; and no licenses for storing and handling hazardous materials, officials said.

No criminal charges had been filed by Monday afternoon.

The owners of the businesses could not be reached for comment Monday.

Inspectors conducted checks of auto-repair shops in the area over a series of evenings this month after a neighborhood group received complaints of illegal activity at some of them, including from neighbors who said they had seen “prostitutes flowing in and out of the establishment” at 1325 Dorchester Ave.

City inspectors took photographs inside and in back of El Auto Repair that documented chaotic piles and stacks of supplies, car parts, trash, and other miscellaneous items.

Photos of one section of the shop show a large hole in the ceiling, and another part of the ceiling appears to be held up by an improvised support system consisting of a beam and a few wooden boards.

The inspections were conducted by the Inspectional Services Department’s Auto Shop Team, Boston police officers, Fire Department officials, and crews equipped to handle hazardous materials.

City officials said they plan to continue the crackdown on other auto repair shops that violate environmental and zoning rules over the next three months.

Matt Rocheleau can be reached at matthew.rocheleau@globe.com.

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