

## Federal government imposes harsh penalties for food-stamp fraud

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A Connecticut businessman was sentenced last week to fifteen months in federal prison, to be followed by three years of supervised release, on charges of food-stamp fraud. The man, a convenience store owner, fraudulently redeemed food stamp benefits for cash and other ineligible items for patrons at his store. Food stamp benefits may not lawfully be exchanged for cash under any circumstances. In addition to his sentence, the store owner was ordered to make full restitution to the government in the amount of \$94,049.59.

The harsh penalties for food stamp fraud extend to recipients of food stamps as well. A Mississippi man was sentenced Monday to five years in prison after pleading guilty to lying on an application for food stamps.

Under the rules of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, applicants are ineligible to receive food stamp benefits if they have been convicted of a drug-related felony after August 22, 1996. The defendant lied on his application, denying that he had been convicted of such a felony, which made his receipt of food stamps fraudulent. In addition to his five year sentence, the defendant was ordered to pay \$2,908 in restitution. For related information, see [here](#) and [here](#).