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## Contra Costa Environmental Health

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[www.cchealth.org/eh/](http://www.cchealth.org/eh/)

December 7, 2015

To  
Address

Dear Food Facility Operator,

I wanted to let you know that, beginning in March, your inspector will hang a green, yellow or red placard (sign) in a public area of your business after every routine inspection. The idea is to give customers an easy way to know that your business is clean and safe, and to learn about any recent, serious health violations.

Most Bay Area counties use a placarding system or are about to start – while new to us, it is becoming an industry standard. We at Contra Costa Environmental Health understand that our permit holders will have questions and concerns and, rest assured, we are here to help.

This letter covers the basics of our new placarding program, and there will be plenty of opportunities to ask questions and learn more about it at upcoming meetings for food facility operators:



**Thursday, Dec. 17 at 2 p.m.**

Richmond Chamber of Commerce  
3925 Macdonald Avenue, Richmond, CA 94805

**Monday, Dec. 21, at 11 a.m.**

Los Medanos College Community Room  
2700 East Leland Road, Pittsburg, CA 94565

**Tuesday, Dec. 22, at 2 p.m.**

Brentwood Chamber of Commerce  
118 Oak Street, Brentwood, CA 94513

**Friday, Dec. 18 at 2 p.m.**

Danville Chamber of Commerce  
117 Town and Country Drive, Danville, CA 94526

**Monday, Dec. 21, at 2 p.m.**

Concord Chamber of Commerce  
2280 Diamond Boulevard, Suite 200, Concord, CA 94520

Please attend the meeting most convenient for you to learn the details and get all your questions answered. In coming weeks we'll also post more information at [cchealth.org/eh/](http://cchealth.org/eh/).

If you can not attend a meeting, the presentation from the meeting can be found at the following website: [cchealth.org/placard](http://cchealth.org/placard). It is approximately 12 minutes long.

Another great resource is your inspector. They're fully briefed on the new program and happy to answer questions. Give yours a call, or call 925-692-2500 to get in touch.

## What the placard means

- A green placard (“pass”) means the inspector found no more than one major violation during the facility’s last routine inspection.
- A yellow placard (“conditional pass”) means two or more major violations were found.
- A red placard (“closed”) means the facility is closed because of an immediate safety issue.

Your sign will be placed inside your business by your inspector, in a place chosen by the inspector. The law prohibits moving, hiding or tampering with it.

Eventually, most businesses will get green placards, most of the time.

## If you get a yellow placard

If a routine inspection does not go well and your business receives a yellow placard, you can request a re-placarding inspection, which will happen unannounced, usually within 10 business days. This replacarding re-inspection just focuses on major violations. Only one replacarding inspection is available per routine inspection.

All permit holders get one free re-placarding inspection per permit year (March to March). Additional replacarding or re-inspections are charged at the usual hourly. Otherwise, every routine inspection is an opportunity to improve your placard.

Businesses that earn yellow placards several inspections in a row will receive training resources from Environmental Health and may be required to conduct additional food-handler training for their staffs.

## Why would a red placard be posted?

As in the past, a facility must immediately close (and gets a red placard) if we find a serious safety issue, such as vermin infestation, no hot or running water, a sewage backup, no power, fire or flood damage, no sanitizer or contaminated water.

Stay tuned for more information. We will keep you informed via email and letters, and remember to check [cchealth.org/eh](http://cchealth.org/eh) for updates.

Sincerely,



Marilyn C. Underwood, PhD, REHS  
Director of Environmental Health

## How to get a green placard

As always, your inspector will focus on safety – the important activities that need to be done correctly to safely sell food. To get a green placard in your window:

- Make sure your food preparation team is knowledgeable about food safety
- Heat and cool food properly, and maintain it at proper temperatures
- Wash hands and use gloves properly
- Do not let anyone work when they are sick
- Clean and sanitize all work surfaces between uses
- Make sure all food comes from approved sources
- Make sure food is in good condition, safe and unadulterated

If the inspector finds that you are not doing one of these activities, it will be a major violation.