

## Placard Program for Permanent and Mobile Retail Food Facilities

Contra Costa County uses a color-coded placard program to publicly report the results of food safety inspections at permanent and mobile retail food facilities. Placards are issued and posted by Contra Costa Environmental Health (CCEH) inspectors and are intended to help customers easily understand a facility's food safety record. The placards also inform customers about observed food safety practices known to be leading causes of foodborne illness.

The placard program applies to all permanent and mobile retail food facilities in Contra Costa County except for temporary food facilities, certified farmer's markets, cottage food operations, and vending machines. Mobile support units and mobile food facilities selling only whole uncut produce, prepackaged non-potentially hazardous food, or prepackaged ice cream are also exempt from the placard program.

### Placards

Placard colors are determined based upon inspection findings. The criteria for each type of placard is listed below.



#### **Green Placard: Pass**

No more than one major violation was observed during the most recent routine or re-placard inspection

#### **Yellow Placard: Conditional Pass**

Two or more major violations were observed during the most recent routine or re-placarding inspection

#### **Red Placard: Closed**

An immediate health hazard was observed and could not be corrected during the most recent inspection

#### **White Placard: Placard Pending**

Issued after the initial opening of a new facility, after change of ownership, or after reinstatement of a suspended health permit

Placards are usually posted near the main entrance, facing outward, or near the point of sale. Only CCEH inspectors may legally post, move, or remove placards. It is the facility's responsibility to maintain the placard where it is posted. If a placard is missing, damaged, or

altered, the facility must contact CCEH within 24 hours for a replacement. Hiding or tampering placards may result in reinspection fees.

## **Inspections**

**Routine inspections** are conducted unannounced to assess a facility's compliance with food safety regulations. Upon completion of a routine inspection, the appropriate placard is issued. Any facility that receives a yellow placard (conditional pass) during a routine inspection will receive a re-placard inspection within 10 business days.

**Re-placard inspections** are unannounced inspections occurring within 10 business days of the facility receiving a yellow placard at a routine inspection. Re-placard inspections are an opportunity for the facility to improve food safety practices and earn a green placard (pass). If a yellow placard is issued at the re-placard inspection, that placard will remain until the next routine inspection.

**Re-inspections** are conducted unannounced to assess a facility's compliance with corrective actions noted on the inspection report. Red or white placards may be issued during re-inspections.

A facility will not be charged for the first re-placard inspection or re-inspection of the permit year (March 1 – February 28 for permanent food facilities and January 1 – December 31 for mobile food facilities). Thereafter, re-inspections and re-placard inspections will be charged at CCEH's hourly rate. Verified complaints, re-opening inspections after a health permit suspension due to an immediate health hazard, and other work not related to the placard program are charged at the hourly rate.

## **Inspection Criteria**

Criteria used for placards are based on critical risk factors identified by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention as contributors to foodborne illness. Examples of critical risk factors include employee hygiene, food temperatures, cross-contamination, and pest infestations. Any major violations found during an inspection must be corrected immediately, in the presence of the inspector, or the facility must close until they are fixed (the health permit is suspended). A closed facility must be re-inspected before it can re-open.

## **Additional Ways to Learn About a Retail Food Facility**

Anyone can request to see a copy of a facility's most recent inspection report by asking the person in charge.

Inspection reports are also available online at the CCEH website:

<https://hsdmobile.cchealth.org/ffinspectionsearch/Default.aspx>

Or by using the Food Inspector mobile app, available for Android and Apple devices:

<https://cchealth.org/eh/food/smartphone-app.php>