



**CONTRA COSTA
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION**
2120 DIAMOND BOULEVARD, SUITE 100
CONCORD, CA 94520
(925) 608-5500 (925) 608-5502 FAX
www.cchealth.org/eh



Placarding Program – Retail Food FAQs

1. What is a retail food facility?

A Retail Food Facility includes any business or entity that sells or gives food (or beverage) to the public (e.g., customers, students, patients, inmates, homeless or needy). This includes restaurants, markets, farm stands, farmers' markets, bars, snack bars, school or staff cafeterias, detention facility kitchens, caterers, production kitchens, commissaries, cottage food, charitable feeding, temporary events (e.g., fairs, festivals), skilled nursing and hospital kitchens, and mobile food (food trucks, ice cream trucks, food carts).

2. What retail food facilities are subject to the placarding program?

Fixed facilities such as restaurants, markets, bars, snack bars, school or employee cafeterias, detention facility kitchens, caterers, productions kitchens, commissaries, charitable feeding.

Mobile facilities except those selling only whole uncut produce, prepackaged ice cream, or prepackaged non-potentially hazardous food items.

3. What is the Placarding Program?

The Contra Costa County Placarding Program is a grading system used to inform customers about a retail facility's compliance with critical risk factors. The placard color indicates the facility's score:

GREEN:	No more than one major critical risk factor violation was found.
YELLOW:	Two or more major critical risk factor violations were found.
RED:	A critical risk factor was found and unable to be immediately corrected. The health permit is suspended and the facility cannot operate until the problem is corrected and Environmental Health conducts a reinspection to verify the problem is fixed.

4. What is a "critical risk factor"?

Critical risk factors involve things that can result in harm to consumes, either by illness or injury. Examples include, handwashing, cross-contamination, food temperatures, cooking of animal products (meats, seafood, eggs), reheating or cooling foods, food sources, water supply, sewage disposal, and pest control.

5. Where are placards posted?

The placard is posted prominently at a customer entrance and affixed with tamper-proof tape.

6. If a facility gets a YELLOW placard, what happens next?

A follow-up inspection is conducted within 10 business days. If the facility has one or fewer major critical violations, a GREEN placard is awarded. If there are two or more major critical violations, the YELLOW placard remains in place pending the results of the next routine inspection.

7. Can repeated violations result in enforcement action other than the placard color?

Yes. A single egregious violation or repeated noncompliance can result in Environmental Health taking enforcement action against a retail food facility. Enforcement actions include reinspection fees, administrative hearing, permit suspension, permit revocation, or referral to the District Attorney's Office.

