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Environmental Health

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Butte County **Green**, **Yellow**, and **Red** Placard Program

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline the Color-Coded Placard Program that will be used in Butte County and the resources available to assist food facility owners and operators.

Background

The Color-Coded Placard Program was adopted by the Butte County Board of Supervisors on May 6, 2014. This program is outlined in the Butte County Code under Chapter 18B and states that all retail food establishments are required to post a color coded placard indicating the compliance status of the establishment's most recent routine inspection or re-inspection.

Placard Criteria

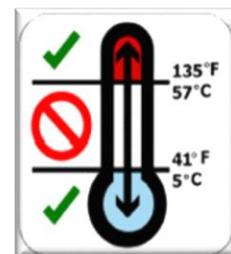
The placarding system is designed to minimize occurrence of the five most critical risk factors for foodborne illness in the United States:



1. Food from unsafe source

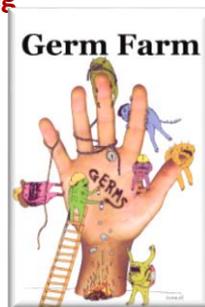


2. Inadequate cooking



3. Improper holding temperatures

4. Contaminated equipment



5. Poor personal hygiene

Updated: October 10, 2014

Assignment of color-coded inspection placards is based on the following factors:

- Number of **Major Violations** observed during a food facility inspection
- Presence of a major violation observed in **three consecutive inspections**
- Presence of an **Imminent Health Hazard** that cannot be mitigated or corrected during the inspection
- Failure to follow the timetable outlined in a **Compliance Agreement** that has been established by mutual agreement between the food facility owner and Environmental Health



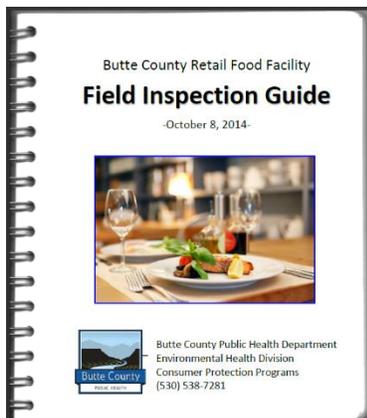
Explanation of Terms

Imminent Health Hazards are major violations that pose a significant threat of causing foodborne illness and require immediate correction or closure of the facility.

Major Violations are food products, handling practices, circumstances, or events that are most likely to result in foodborne illness and therefore receive the highest priority for correction.

Minor Violations are conditions that do not constitute an imminent health hazard but which create non-sanitary conditions for the preparation of food. Minor violations include some food temperature violations, plumbing issues, excessive build-up of grease and debris in non-food contact areas, and walls, floors, or equipment that cannot be easily cleaned due to dilapidated conditions.

A Compliance Agreement is a written agreement between the food facility owner and specific minor violations.



A more in-depth description of major and minor violations observed during retail food facility inspections is contained in Environmental Health's Field Inspection Guide. Directions for finding this guide online are provided in the section "Other Resources" at the end of this document.

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The three color-coded placards are described in the following table:

<p>GREEN PLACARD</p> 	<p>The following criteria must be met for issuance of a Green Pass placard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No more than one major violation that is mitigated or corrected during the inspection
<p>YELLOW PLACARD</p> 	<p>One of the following conditions would result in issuance of a Yellow Conditional Pass placard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two or more major violations, or• Violation of a compliance agreement for correction of non-major violations, or• The same single major violation observed in <u>three consecutive</u> inspections
<p>RED PLACARD</p> 	<p>The following criteria would result in issuance of a Red Closed placard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any major violation that pose an imminent health hazard that cannot be mitigated or corrected during the inspection

Inspection Frequency

Routine inspection frequency for food facilities is determined by the risk-based category assigned to the facility. The following table describes our three risk-based categories:

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Risk-Based Category	Description	Inspections per Year
A	➤ Large restaurants and markets with complex and/or extensive food service	3
B	➤ Restaurants ➤ Grocery store/markets ➤ School cafeterias ➤ Health care facilities ➤ Mobile food facilities with significant food prep	2
C	➤ Food facilities with no food preparation and no utensil washing areas ➤ Mobile food facility with limited food prep	1

Placard Location

Upon completion of a routine inspection or re-inspection, facility operator will post the placard so as to be clearly visible to the general public and to patrons entering the food facility. Under most circumstances, this means that the placard will be posted by the facility operator in one of the following locations:

- In the front window of the food facility
- In a display case mounted on the outside front wall of the food facility within five feet of the front door
- In a location approved by Environmental Health staff to ensure proper notice to the general public and to patrons

If the food facility is operated in the same building as a separately permitted or licensed business, or if the facility shares a common patron entrance with a separately permitted facility or licensed business, the placard must be posted in the initial patron contact area.

Under certain conditions the affected area of the facility may be posted with the Red Closed placard and the remainder of the facility be allowed to remain open and posted with a Green Pass or Yellow Conditional Pass placard. In such cases, a Red

Closed placard will be posted at the affected area and a Green Pass placard or Yellow Conditional Pass placard will be posted at the approved location by the main entrance. In order for this provision to apply, both of the following conditions must be met:

- The affected areas of a facility can be isolated, such as in facilities with several permits or multiple billing units (e.g. supermarkets with delis and meat markets); and
- The facility can operate in a safe manner without the isolated area

Placard Maintenance

A placard remains valid from the time of issuance until a new placard is issued at time of routine inspection, re-inspection or change of ownership. Defacing, marking, hiding, or removing the placard is prohibited. Defacing or premature removal of a placard may result in one or more of the following enforcement actions:

- Issuance of a citation for an infraction of county code
- Suspension or revocation of the facility's Permit-to-Operate
- Billed daily re-inspections

Compliance

Re-inspections for Yellow Conditional Pass placards will take place within 24 hours after the initial inspection. Re-inspection for Red Closed placards will take place within 24 hours of receipt of a request by the facility to re-inspect. If necessary, re-inspections may be conducted during the weekend.

If a repeat major violation exists at the re-inspection or if two or more new major violations are observed, a new Yellow Conditional Pass placard will be issued. If all original major violations are corrected at the re-inspection and one new major violation is observed, a Green Pass placard will be issued.

When a facility receives repeated re-inspections without compliance being attained, measures will be initiated to provide the food facility owner and operator with additional information, training and/or incentives to correct the observed deficiencies, as shown in the following table:

Phased Interventions

When a Second Re-Inspection is Required

➤ If the violations resulting in the initial Yellow Conditional Pass placard have **not** been corrected so that a **second** re-inspection is required:

- A letter will be sent to the facility owner reinforcing the information provided in the inspection report
- Additional educational information and resources will be provided to the facility operator



The second re-inspection will be billed at Environmental Health’s hourly rate 

When a Third Re-Inspection is Required

➤ When the violations resulting in the Yellow Conditional Pass placard still have **not** been corrected so that a **third** re-inspection is required:

- A letter will be sent to facility owner reinforcing the information provided in the inspection report and, depending on the compliance history of the facility and the type of major violation that is recurring, one of the following actions will be taken in an effort to attain compliance:
 - 1) The facility owner, manager, and staff will be required to attend a food safety class put on by Environmental Health or another training approved by Environmental Health; or
 - 2) A compliance meeting with the Environmental Health Director will be scheduled to provide the facility owner an opportunity to justify why the facility’s Permit-to-Operate should not be suspended or revoked



The third re-inspection and Environmental Health’s time for the cost of the food safety class will be billed at Environmental Health’s hourly rate 

When a Third Re-Inspection Does Not Achieve Compliance

➤ When the violations resulting in the Yellow Conditional Pass placard **still have not** been corrected, the facility’s Permit-to-Operate will be suspended or revoked following the procedures specified in the California Retail Food Co 



Program Implementation

Pilot Program

There will be a 6-month pilot “soft” implementation period prior to actual issuance and posting of placards. During this 6-month period, the following activities will take place:

- Environmental Health staff will provide regional training workshops for food facilities and the public to increase familiarity with the program
- Environmental Health staff will provide all food facilities affected by the program with written information by mail and individual facility training upon request
- Environmental Health’s Consumer Protection Supervisor will work with staff to assure that inspection methodology, observations and code interpretation are fully standardized to avoid inconsistencies

Full Implementation

After completion of the 6-month pilot “soft” implementation period, all food facilities will be mailed a Green Pass placard to post at the entrance of their facilities. In addition, the Food Safety Advisory Group will meet to assess the need for any changes in program implementation based on experience obtained during the initial implementation period.

Training Workshops

Butte County Public Health Department will be offering 2-hour regional “**How to Get a Green Placard**” training workshops in November to provide each participant with a clear understanding of how to receive and maintain a Green “PASS” placard. The workshop schedule is as follows:

Chico	Oroville	Paradise
Butte Co. Employment and Social Service Office 2445 Carmichael Drive November 5 at 9:00 a.m. November 6 at 3:00 p.m.	Butte County Public Health Department 202 Mira Loma Drive in the Tahoe Room November 7 at 9:00 a.m.	Paradise Square Banquet Room (behind the Chamber) 5550 Skyway November 13 at 9:00 a.m.



Additional Resources

The California Retail Food Code (CalCode) establishes uniform regulation of health and sanitation standards for retail food facilities and is the primary reference used in food facility inspections.

The Butte County Retail Food Inspection Field Guide provides a reference list of CalCode codes and examples of “major” and “minor” violations for each item on the Official Inspection Report used by staff.

These documents can be viewed on Environmental Health’s Retail Food webpage found at this link: <http://www.buttecounty.net/publichealth/environmental/rff.html>

Below is a quick guide to assist you in finding this webpage.



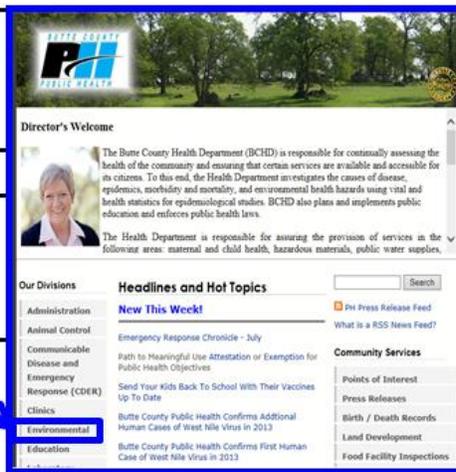
Guide to Web-Based Information on Food Safety

Step #1:

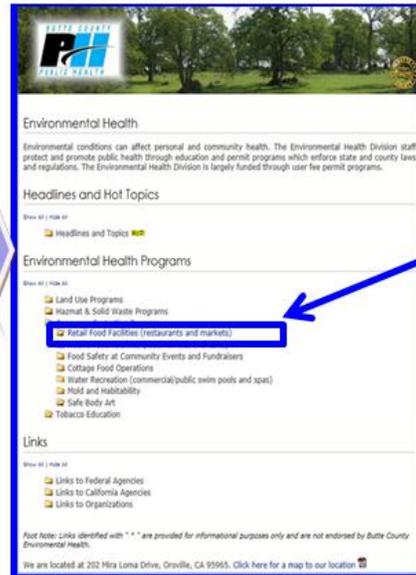
Open your web browser and type www.buttecounty.net/publichealth

Step #2:

Select the "Environmental" link to take you to the EH webpage.



Department's Webpage



Environmental Health's Webpage

Step #3:

Select the "Retail Food Facilities" link to take you to the CalCode, the Field Inspection Guide, and the latest information on the placarding program.

If you would like additional information or have questions? Contact our Consumer Protection Supervisor, Elaine McSpadden, at 530-538-6773 or send her an email at: emcspadden@buttecounty.net.