



NEWS

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January 12, 2016

New Restaurant Placarding Program Starts in 2016

New placarding program makes it easier for consumers to feel confident when eating out

SAN MATEO, Calif. – The new year brings an easier way for the public to understand how restaurants score on food safety inspections, as San Mateo County started to roll out its new restaurant placarding program on January 1, 2016.

The new placarding program uses the same familiar traffic light colors—green, yellow, and red—which are already on display at food facilities across other Bay Area counties. The public can expect to see the placards go up throughout the first half of the year as County inspectors make the rounds at more than 3,000 restaurants, mobile food trucks, bakeries, schools, health care facilities, and some convenience stores.

At a glance, customers will be able to spot a green placard for “go,” which means a restaurant passed a food safety inspection, yellow for “caution,” a conditional pass, which means that the facility will be inspected again in one to three days, or red for “stop,” indicating that the facility will be closed until unsafe conditions are corrected.

“Foodborne illnesses are 100% preventable, and yet every year, one in six Americans gets sick from them, and 3,000 die,” said Heather Forshey, Director of San Mateo County Environmental Health Services. “This program will help consumers quickly understand a restaurant’s food safety status and give restaurant operators a chance to show off their successful commitment to food safety.”

Over the last six months, Environmental Health Services inspectors worked closely with restaurants to help them understand and prepare for the new placarding program. Environmental Health Services also offered more than a dozen training sessions across the County in English, Spanish, and Cantonese, and has extensive training videos available in those languages at smchealth.org/placarding.

Taking a regional approach to grading and placarding creates consistency for food operators with restaurants in multiple counties, and benefits the public by providing an easy and consistent way to make an informed decision when eating out.

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