



# News Release

## Alameda County Department of Environmental Health

1131 Harbor Bay Parkway - Alameda, CA 94502

Phone: 510.567.6700

Date: June 29, 2012

Contact: Ronald Browder, 510.567.6726

Sherri Willis, 510.267.8001

### **New Grading System for Alameda County Food Facilities Starts July 1**

*Look for green, yellow and red placards*

Green, Yellow and Red - those are the colors of the placards that will be posted at Alameda County retail food facilities (excluding City of Berkeley) effective July 1<sup>st</sup>. The grading system is the latest enhancement to the Department's food safety program and will eventually impact the over 6000 food facilities in the County.

Pass (green), Conditional Pass (yellow), and Closed (red) placards will rank the food safety status of food facilities inspected after July 1<sup>st</sup>. Initially, foodservice operations at restaurants, school cafeterias, healthcare facilities, commissaries, supermarkets and bakeries will receive placards after a routine inspection is conducted. Mobile food and prepackaged facilities will be posted later in the year. The placards are to be posted at or near the entrance of the facility in public view.

Prior to implementation, the Department presented the Grading System concept to the mayors, Chambers of Commerce, the California Restaurant Association and others for input and comment. Counties that have grading systems in place were consulted as well. Invitation letters to attend community meetings (eighteen to date) throughout the county were sent to all food facility operators.

"We chose to use the Placard Grading System because the stop light (Red, Yellow & Green) is a universal concept and easy to interpret. The placard's design provides a historical summary of the facility's food safety status. Yellow placards are posted for seven days maximum to upgrade to green placard status or the health permit is suspended."

The grading system will provide the dining public with a simple means to understand at a glance the food safety status of a facility. Routine inspections of food facilities, currently averaging about 2.2 times a year, will generate the appropriate placard immediately following the inspection.

- **Green** indicates no major violations of food safety after the inspection.
- **Yellow** means two or more [major food safety violations](#) were identified and corrected during the inspection. A follow-up inspection will occur within a week.
- **Red** indicates the facility has been closed due to one or more uncorrected major food safety violations. All violations must be corrected and a re-inspection conducted before the facility can reopen.

Environmental Health's [new inspection results website](#) will include the food safety status of food facilities by color-coded dots on GIS maps. Facilities with blue dots have yet to be inspected for grading/placarding purposes. As inspections are conducted, the website will be updated with the color of the placard issued after the inspection.