



County of Sacramento

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Green-Yellow-Red Restaurant Rating Program Marks 5-Year Anniversary

“Pass” placards increase to 94 percent; health risk violations down 26 percent

Sacramento, CA – This month marks the 5-year anniversary of the Environmental Management Department’s (EMD) restaurant rating program, which assigns restaurants and other food facilities a green, yellow or red placard based on health inspection results. The program, launched in January 2007, has been successful in educating restaurants and consumers, and improving the health of Sacramento County residents by preventing foodborne illnesses.

Since the Green-Yellow-Red food safety program began, food facilities receiving a green or “Pass” placard during routine, unannounced inspections increased from 88 to 94 percent, said Val Siebal, director of the Environmental Management Department. At the same time, major health risk violations that could potentially cause foodborne illness have decreased 26 percent since 2007.

“The program has been well-received by food facility owners and operators, and is popular with restaurant patrons. The color-coded placards give consumers an instant message about the establishment’s food safety inspection record and compliance with State and local food safety laws,” said Siebal.

Restaurants, markets, bakeries, school cafeterias and other retail food establishments in Sacramento County are required to post a green, yellow, or red placard at or near the entrance of their facility. A green or “PASS” sign denotes a high level of compliance. A yellow or “CONDITIONAL PASS” sign is posted when two or more major food safety violations are found and corrected before the inspector leaves. The business will remain open and a re-inspection is conducted, usually within 48 hours, to assure continued compliance. A red or “CLOSED” sign is posted when an establishment is closed for an immediate health hazard.

The Green-Yellow-Red placard program is modeled after Toronto, Canada’s successful program, said Siebal. “Columbus, Ohio implemented a color-coded inspection program similar to Sacramento’s, and other counties are looking at our program.”

EMD recently added a food inspection mobile website to take advantage of the growing popularity of mobile devices that can look up information on the go. When accessed with a smartphone (iPhone, Droid, Windows phone, etc.), the site, m.ffi.saccounty.net, shows the user’s current location with nearby retail food facilities marked on the map. The color of the marker indicates the most recent food inspection result (Green, Yellow or Red, matching the placard on display at the facility itself) and inspection date, along with links to view the inspection report itself. The free smartphone applications can easily be found in the Android Market and iTunes app stores by searching for ‘Sac Food.’

Color-coded inspection signs are just one component of EMD’s Food Safety Program. EMD will continue to post inspection reports at www.emd.saccounty.net along with the results of the placard issued for the most recent inspection.

