



Maricopa County

News Release

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An "A" for Food Safety **Maricopa County Environmental Services announces its new Food Inspection Grading System**

The Maricopa County Environmental Services department (MCESD) is excited to announce the implementation of a new system to help grade food safety. This Grading System was selected by county residents through an online survey.

A, B, C, D... how well is your favorite eatery doing? The grading system will now provide an "at a glance" indication of how each food establishment performs as a result of their required, unscheduled food safety inspection.

MCESD understands that the public and food establishments in general share our concern for food safety. This program is designed to grade the food establishments in terms of food safety requirements and acknowledge those that do a good job.

"Minimizing food borne illness risks by ensuring food safety practices are the main goals of our food inspections and efforts", says John Kolman, director with the Maricopa County Environmental Services department. "The public and the food industry in general will benefit from this program and new tool, so we invite all food establishments to participate".

A survey with two different models was made available on the department's website for the public's consideration and selection: an Award System recognizing "Excellent, Good and Fair", and a Grading System giving an "A, B or C". The Grading System resulted in being favored by about 70% of the nearly 600 votes received.

The grading of food inspections will occur starting on Friday, October 14, 2011. This program will continue to be of voluntary participation. Operators can opt in or opt out of the Grading System for each inspection prior to the inspection being conducted. If an establishment doesn't participate in the Grading System, the term "Not Participating" will appear in the "Grade" column but the inspection will still occur.

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The Department continues to provide an online tool for the public to review all food inspection reports conducted as part of our unscheduled food safety inspection program. Additionally, the reports state the number and classification of any deficiencies noted at time of inspection. MCESD has also posted a user friendly chart of the voluntary Grading System with each online inspection report. According to the chart, the public will be able to see how each establishment earned their grade.

It is important to note that any time the Department finds an establishment not capable of providing safe food service their permit is immediately suspended until such time that they can once again demonstrate safe food service.

For more details and to access restaurant and other establishments' food inspection reports and grades received, please visit: www.maricopa.gov/envsvc.
To contact Maricopa County Environmental Services you may also call (602) 506-6616.