



County of Santa Cruz

Health Services Agency ♦ Environmental Health Division

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Reusable Containers

Doing our part to keep green! Effective January 1, 2020, California Assembly Bill (AB) 619 was approved changing the conditions under which customer provided containers can be managed. Prior to the passing of this law, reusable containers had to be cleaned and refilled at an approved facility unless food service staff could refill the container using a contamination free transfer process.

AB 619 will allow food service staff to isolate customer consumer owned utensils from serving surfaces (use a contamination free process) **or** sanitize surfaces in between. The food facility operator must prepare, maintain, and adhere to written procedures to prevent cross contamination between customer containers and food preparation activities. These procedures must be available to enforcement staff upon request. Containers used in the process must be constructed for re-use. Food Service staff must adhere to handwashing requirements.

Elements of the plan must include:

- Foods to be served using the customer containers
- Description of the types of containers that will be accepted and process for denial
- Surfaces used to manage customer containers
- Process to prevent cross -contamination
- Frequency of sanitizing surfaces
- When handwashing must occur

For more information refer to California Retail Food Code Section 11421.

Multi-Use Utensils at Community Events

AB 619 included provisions under which multi-use utensils could be used at community events. Prior to the passage of this law, only single use utensils could be used a community event. Under this new law, the local enforcement agency could allow multi-use wares to be used at community events provided the temporary food facility operators provide a method to wash, rinse and sanitize utensils. The temporary food booth operator (or event organizer) must demonstrate they have an established process and enough potable water and wastewater capacity to conduct this activity.

Proposals must include:

- Types of utensils to be washed, rinsed and sanitized
- Where and how soiled utensils will be staged and collected
- Location of warewashing facilities
- Equipment used to wash, rinse and sanitize utensils
- Potable water source and storage method
- Capacity of potable water
- Solid (food scrap) waste disposal
- Capacity of wastewater
- Wastewater disposal method
- Frequency of sanitizing surfaces
- When handwashing must occur
- How sanitized wares will be returned for re-use and kept free of contamination

For more information refer to California Retail Food Code Section 114353.

Please contact the Environmental Health Division at (831) 454-2022 with questions. District health inspection staff is generally in the office between 8AM and 9AM Monday through Friday (excluding holidays).