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# HEALTH CARE AGENCY/PUBLIC HEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH *INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN*

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**TO: Orange County Retail Food Establishment Owners/Operators**

**SUBJECT: Enclosure of Food Establishments**

There has been an increasing trend in the restaurant industry to want to "open up" the fronts of food establishments by installing numerous door or window openings in order to create more of an open air environment for customers. The presence of these open air conditions greatly increases the possibility of food becoming contaminated by flies, mice, rats, dust, and other contaminants that can easily enter through windows and doors.

Fly prevention in food establishments is particularly important since flies frequently carry bacteria from garbage and feces to food and utensils. Flies have been known to become contaminated with numerous pathogenic organisms including those causing cholera, shigellosis, salmonellosis, and infectious hepatitis. Since a fly can take in only liquid food, it constantly emits vomit onto solid food to liquefy it.

Section 114259 of the California Retail Food Code states that, "A food facility shall at all times be so constructed, equipped, maintained, and operated as to prevent the entrance and harborage of animals, birds, and vermin, including, but not limited to, rodents and insects."

It is the opinion of Environmental Health that the open air conditions created by numerous door and window openings do not comply with this section of the law. In order to comply with the health codes, the food establishment must be fully enclosed, with only those doors that are necessary and reasonable for ingress and egress to and from the facility being permitted. In addition, the following exclusion measures are required at all food establishments:

- Air curtain devices must be installed above all delivery doors, pass-through windows, and customer entrance doors (where positive pressure air conditioning is not provided).
- All exterior doors must be self-closing and maintained closed. Doors shall be provided with weather stripping to eliminate all gaps of 1/4 inch or more. Extra doors such as French-style doors are not permitted.
- All openable windows must be equipped with permanent screens with no less than 16 mesh screening.

If you have any questions regarding Environmental Health's requirements for the enclosure of food establishments, please contact your local Environmental Health Specialist at (714) 433-6000.

ENCLOSURE OF FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS/info bul  
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