



Why Has My Building been Posted and What Does It Mean?

Handout No: 70
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Following a disaster or incident where buildings may be significantly damaged, the City of Sonoma Building Department will likely conduct a safety assessment evaluation to determine if the structure(s) are safe to occupy. Following the safety assessment, the safety assessment team or inspector working for the City of Sonoma will typically post one of three different types of placards on the structure or property. The following describes each of the three safety evaluation placards that may be posted on properties and their meanings.

UNSAFE Posting (Red Placard)

This placard indicates it is unsafe to occupy or enter the building for any reason. Even when a building can be entered for inspection it is still possible that internal damage could pose dangers requiring an UNSAFE posting. It is also possible that an otherwise safe building must be posted UNSAFE because it is threatened by falling hazards from a nearby building.

The red UNSAFE placard is posted only when there is an immediate risk associated with entry, use, or occupancy of a structure. If an UNSAFE placard is posted, the building owner must apply for a permit to enter the building and mitigate the hazard by means acceptable to the City Building Department. This usually necessitates that the owner hire a design professional (engineer or architect) and a contractor to assess the risks, create a hazard mitigation plan and remove or otherwise mitigate the hazardous conditions that make the building unsafe.

It is important to understand that the “red tag” UNSAFE posting does not automatically mean that the property has been condemned or that demolition of the structure will be required.

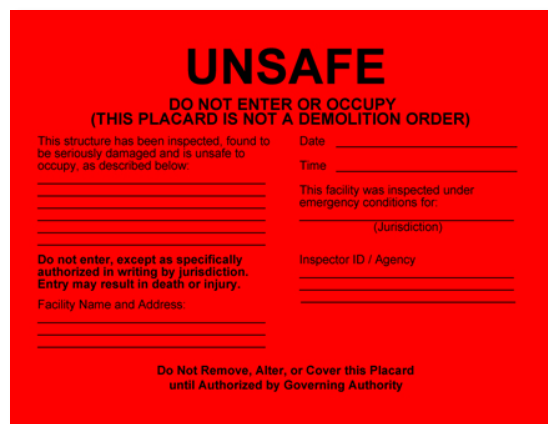
RESTRICTED USE Posting (Yellow Placard)



A RESTRICTED USE placard is used by the safety assessment team or inspector to identify situations where a hazard exists and the observed damage precludes unrestricted occupancy or use of the building. For example, if the evaluation reveals damage to a portion of the building or necessitates some restriction on the use or occupancy of the whole building, the yellow RESTRICTED USE placard will normally be used.

Examples of nonstructural damage that could lead to a RESTRICTED USE posting include the loss of use of basic sanitary facilities due to broken water or sewer pipes or damage to a fire sprinkler

system required for safe full occupancy. A description of the limits or conditions of continued use will be written on the RESTRICTED USE placard.



In addition, in situations where potential falling or other hazard exist, the immediate area may be marked or otherwise barricaded with yellow tape having a message that reads *Do Not Enter, Danger, Caution, Restricted Area, Keep Out*, or similar cautionary wording.

INSPECTED Posting (Green Placard)

INSPECTED
LAWFUL OCCUPANCY PERMITTED

Facility Address and Name (if known): _____

This structure has been inspected (as indicated below) and no apparent structural hazard has been found.

Inspected Exterior Only
 Inspected Exterior and Interior

Please report any unsafe condition to local authorities;
Re-inspection may be required.

Inspector Comments: _____

Date: _____
Time: _____
Inspector ID / Agency: _____

CAUTION: Aftershocks since inspection may increase damage and risk.

This facility was inspected under emergency conditions for the City of Sonoma.

For more information contact the City of Sonoma at 707-938-3681

City of Sonoma

IT IS UNLAWFUL TO ALTER, COVER OR REMOVE THIS PLACARD UNTIL AUTHORIZED BY THE CITY OF SONOMA BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Where damage is not observed, or does not otherwise appear to pose any significant safety hazard, a green INSPECTED placard may be posted. This posting is intended to inform occupants that the building may be safely occupied. An INSPECTED placard does not imply that any existing damage should be ignored or that repairs are not otherwise necessary.

If the inspection team was not able to enter inside of the building but found no hazards from the exterior of the building, the INSPECTED placard will be marked “Exterior Only.” If the inspection team was able to enter the building and found no hazards, the INSPECTED placard will be marked

“Exterior and Interior.” If you believe there are hazards inside of your building and you find an INSPECTED placard marked “Exterior Only,” you should request a re-inspection by the City safety assessment team or building inspector to review the potential interior hazard(s).

Posting Changes

It is possible that subsequent damaging occurrences or aftershocks could create new damage or increase the initial damage, causing the need for an INSPECTED or RESTRICTED USE posting to be changed to a more restricted level of use. Typically, the Building Department will conduct safety assessments of posted buildings after a major aftershock, even if re-inspections are not requested by the owner. If an aftershock or other damaging occurrence has noticeably and substantially increased damage to your building, you should request a re-inspection by a City safety assessment team or building inspector. You should also consider engaging design and construction professionals after you observe any significant damage to your building.

For more information, see City of Sonoma Building Department Informational Handout #71 *Guidance for Owners and Occupants of Earthquake Damaged Buildings* at <https://www.sonomacity.org/helpful-information/>.

For questions or to report damage to the City of Sonoma Building Department call 707-938-3681 or send an e-mail to building@sonomacity.org.

It is unlawful to alter, cover or remove any safety assessment placard that has been posted until authorized by the City of Sonoma Building Department