

HEALTH CARE AGENCY/PUBLIC HEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

To: Orange County Retail Food Facility Operators

Subject: **Beverage Refill Programs**

Beverage refill programs have become a popular marketing tool for both "fast-food" and "full-service" food facilities. Beverage refill programs allow the consumer to buy a beverage and consume it on the premises, and then refill the beverage for a reduced fee, or at no cost.

The Environmental Health Division is concerned with the increased risk of cross-contamination that could occur whenever a beverage container is returned from the public back into the hands of a food worker. The soiled returned container poses a potential risk of contamination to the employee's hands, beverage service equipment, and utensils. In consideration of this potential hazard, this Agency does not allow any beverage container (cup, glass, etc.) to be taken back into the possession of the food worker for refilling once it has originally left their control.

Refill programs that have been reviewed and found acceptable include those in which:

- 1. A new cup is issued with each requested refill; or,
- 2. The customer's container is refilled from a pitcher or pot at the service counter or tableside; or,
- 3. A customer self-service beverage station is provided which utilizes push button or handrelease levers or other National Sanitation Foundation listed sanitary levers; or,
- 4. A glass removed from the customer's table, for refilling by an employee, is replaced with a clean glass.

Alternative methods must be submitted to and approved by Orange County Environmental Health prior to their initiation in the food facility. For more information regarding approved beverage refill programs, contact Orange County Environmental Health at (714) 433-6000.

BEVERAGE REFILL/info bul

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