

# STAFF REPORT

## City of Lancaster

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MVB

Date: January 10, 2012

To: Mayor Parris and City Council Members

From: Robert C. Neal, Director of Public Works

Subject: **Placards to Denote Conditions of Occupancy for Buildings**

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**Recommendation:**

Introduce **Ordinance No. 973**, an ordinance of the City Council of the City of Lancaster, California, adding Chapter 15.25 to the Lancaster Municipal Code, relating to placards used to denote conditions relating to continued occupancy of buildings.

**Fiscal Impact:**

None.

**Background:**

Placards that clearly identified the condition of buildings to owners and occupants were first used after the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989. The Applied Technology Council (ATC) reviewed their ATC-20 document based on information learned from the Loma Prieta experience, including a revised edition of the three placards. This document, including the revised placards, has been included in the Post-Disaster Safety Assessment Program (SAP), managed by the California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA). This ordinance and placards conform to the recommendations of CalEMA and the ATC-20 document.

Placards have been widely used in past earthquakes to denote the condition of building and structures. And while many of these have been those recommended in the ATC-20 document, they have not been officially adopted by the jurisdiction, and as such, they only represent a recommendation and cannot be enforced. Adopting the placards by ordinance makes them official and enforceable.

In past events, there have been a number of reports of placards being removed from buildings by owners or tenants. In other cases, there have been reports of the unauthorized change of placards, usually from UNSAFE to one of the other categories. In both cases, adopting placards by ordinance allows the City to enforce the posting with local law enforcement, if necessary. Placards are placed on a building to protect the owner, tenant, and the general public. No action should be permitted that would compromise such protection.

CE:lcs

**Attachment:**

Ordinance No. 973