

DEADLINE EXTENDED

THE FDA HAS OFFICIALLY EXTENDED THE COMPLIANCE DEADLINE TO DECEMBER 2016. THIS GIVES YOU MORE TIME TO PLAN AND BUDGET FOR THE UPCOMING CHANGES

NEW DEADLINE:

DEC. 2016



S T U D I O

TAKE THE BITE OUT OF
THE FDA'S NEW MENU
LABELING RULES

DEADLINE EXTENDED

THE FDA HAS OFFICIALLY EXTENDED THE COMPLIANCE DEADLINE TO DECEMBER 2016. THIS GIVES YOU MORE TIME TO PLAN AND BUDGET FOR THE UPCOMING CHANGES.

NEW DEADLINE: DEC. 2016

The gift of time.

Now that you have time to do it right, and do it well, let us help you from the beginning.

Following a complimentary site audit, we will work with you to determine the best course of action for your brand and your budget.

You've been given the gift of time... **Don't waste it.**





The clock is ticking: applicable restaurants have only until December 1, 2015 to comply with all new menu labeling rules.

It started with a long-slumbering provision in the 2010 Affordable Care Act mandating nutritional labeling at many restaurants and food establishments. However, it took the FDA until this year to release the specific rules that would govern the labeling program. Now, the FDA has released its guidelines, along with a firm, fast-approaching deadline.

The law is controversial, and some legislators are trying to pass new rules that would limit its scope; but for now, these new menu labeling rules are the law of the land, and food service operators must comply. Unfortunately, as with any federal regulations, they're a confusing mess of legal definitions, exceptions, and exclusions. And it's not just restaurants and fast food operators that must comply: unusual suspects like movie theaters, stadiums, event facilities and more may find themselves under scrutiny from the FDA.

But there's no need to scramble, even with only months left until the deadline. We've got you covered: menu boards are our bread-and-butter - we've been doing them for over three decades - and we've already prepared answers to your basic questions and cooked up our best recommendations to find the right solution to comply with the law.

In this paper, we'll break the rules down into plain English and get you started with a two-step action plan to help you comply by the deadline. We'll explore your options - including what you can do fast and within budget - and give you tips to spare you hours of frustration.

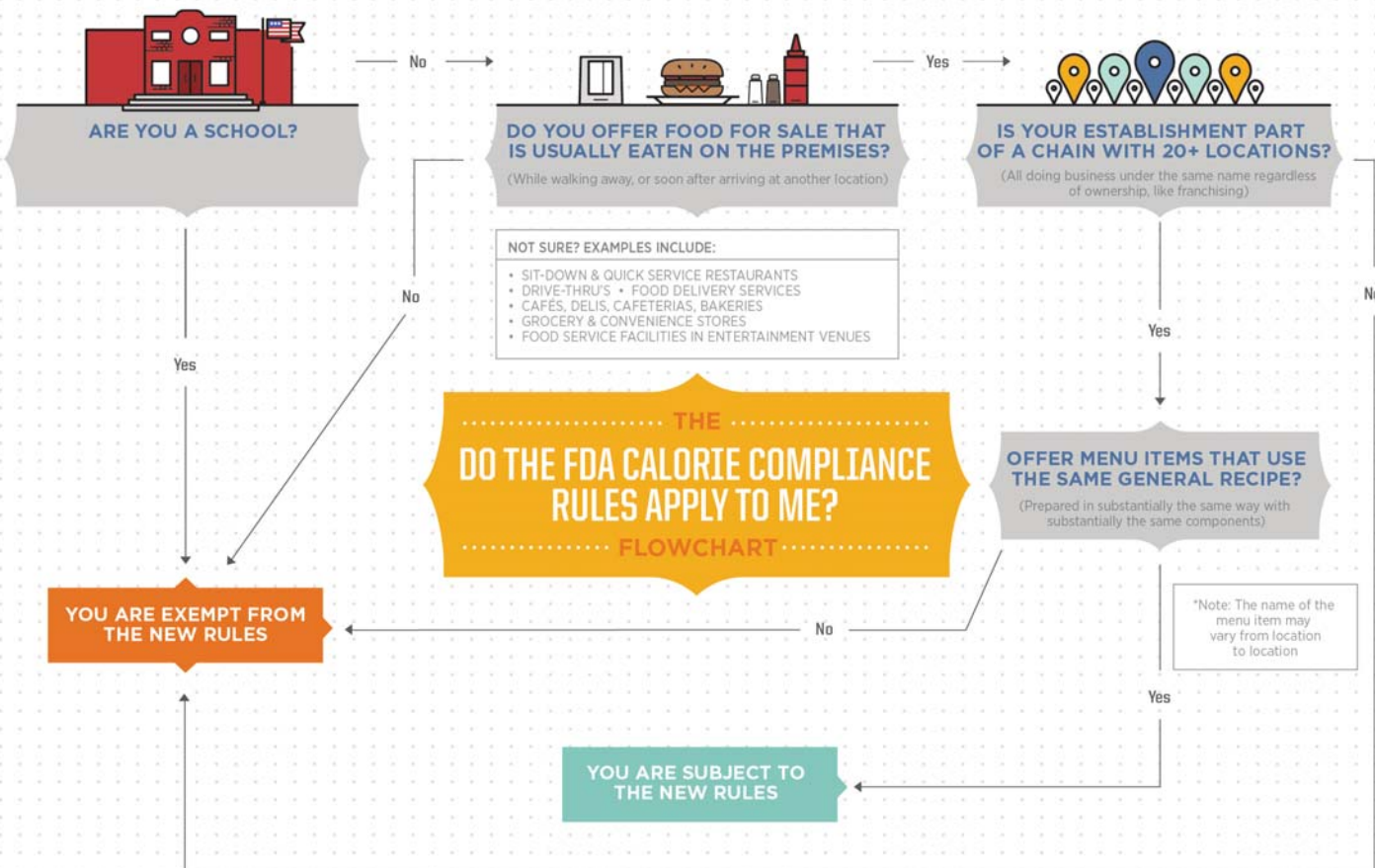
We'll begin on the next page by determining if the rules even apply to your establishment (with a handy flowchart).

ICE CREAM			
CUPS & CONES			
SUGAR CONE OR CAKE CONE			
	500 Cal.	6.50	
	550 Cal.	5.45	
	600 Cal.	6.00	
	525 Cal.	6.75	
BAKED WAFFLE CONES			
	550 Cal.	7.50	
ED	675 Cal.	6.45	
	750 Cal.	6.75	
	600 Cal.	7.75	

Baskin-Robbins Menu Board

Step 1: Determine if the new rules apply to your establishment:

Start Here:



Also: Optional Opt-In

Even if the new rules do not apply to you, you may still choose to comply voluntarily. It might even benefit you to do so: the federal rules supersede non-identical state and local nutrition labeling requirements, so if you're subject to local rules that are more onerous than the federal rules, federal compliance would simplify your obligation. For more details, visit the FDA website and read Section VI of the rules.

The kinds of foods also make a difference: not all foods must have nutritional information labeled.

Included foods: Is the food processed and prepared primarily in a retail establishment and ready for human consumption? Remember the second question in the flowchart above: is the food intended to be eaten immediately (on premises) or soon after (while walking away or after arriving at another location)?

- Meals served at sit-down or quick-serve restaurants;
- Take-out;
- Delivery pizza;
- Ready-to-eat meals (from grocers, convenience stores, movie theaters, etc.);
- Buffets and salad bars;
- Self-service foods and food on displays (such as at a coffee shop or café).

Excluded foods: Or is the food prepared in a different environment and/or not intended for immediate consumption, like bin foods at a grocery store; or does the food only appear for a brief time, like:

- Daily specials not routinely listed on a menu or menu board
- Custom orders;
- Temporary food items;*
- Food that is part of a customary market test and appear on a menu or menu board;*
- Self-service foods and foods on display?*

* These food items must appear for less than either a cumulative total of 60 days per year or a consecutive total of 90 days.

Step 2: Determine what you must disclose to consumers:

Calories are the basic piece of information that applicable food service establishments must now disclose, with additional nutrients available via supplemental materials. The rules are very specific where and how this information is to be disclosed; basically, the calorie declaration must be equally visible and at least as conspicuous the food item's actual menu or menu board entry.

CALORIES	Amounts	Where	Type Size	Color	Background
You must declare the number of calories contained in each standard menu item listed on the menu or menu board, as usually prepared and offered for sale.	Up to nearest 5-calorie increment up to 50 calories; and to the nearest 10-calorie increments over 50 calories.	Adjacent to the name or price; the term "Cal" or "Calories" must also appear as a column heading above the numbers, or adjacent to each number.	No smaller than the name or price, whichever is smaller.	Same color, or a color at least as conspicuous as the name or price.	With the same contrasting background or a background at least as contrasting.

Then, a series of additional statements must be prominently displayed to (1) help consumers understand the nutritional information they're reading (the "succinct statement") and alert them to the availability of extra materials with more in-depth nutritional disclosures.

SUCCINCT STATEMENT	Standard	Where	Type Size	Color	Background
You must make a succinct statement to enable consumers to understand, in the context of a total daily diet, the significance of the calorie information provided on menus and menu boards.	"2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice, but calorie needs vary." Variations for kid menus are allowed.	Prominently, in a conspicuous, clear manner; typically appearing on the bottom of each page menu or each menu board.	No smaller than the calorie declarations.	Same color, or a color at least as conspicuous as the calorie declarations.	With the same contrasting background or a background at least as contrasting as the calorie declarations.

STATEMENT of Additional Information	Standard	Where	Type Size	Color	Background
You must make a statement that additional written nutrition information is available upon request.	"Additional nutrition information available upon request."	Prominently, in a conspicuous, clear manner; typically adjacent to the succinct statement (just above, below or beside).	No smaller than the calorie declarations.	Same color, or a color at least as conspicuous as the calorie declarations.	With the same contrasting background or a background at least as contrasting as the calorie declarations.

ADDITIONAL INFO Materials	Must Include	Where	Type Size	Color	Background
<p>You must also make additional written nutrition information available upon request. Requirements do not apply if the standard menu item contains insignificant amounts of all of the nutrients required to be disclosed, i.e. a declaration of zero or less than one gram.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total calories (cal) • Calories from fat (fat cal) • Total fat (g) • Saturated fat (g) • Trans fat (g) • Cholesterol (mg) • Sodium (mg) • Total carbohydrates (g) • Dietary fiber (g) • Sugars (g) • Protein (g) 	<p>Must be available in written form on the premises of the covered and establishment and provided to the customer upon request.</p> <p>Items must be ordered as the list to the left.</p>	<p>The information must be presented in a clear and conspicuous manner, using color, type size and contrasting background that render the information likely to be read and understood by the ordinary individual under customary conditions of purchase and use. Standard abbreviations are allowed.</p> <p>The written document can take the form of: counter card, sign, poster, handout, booklet, loose leaf binder, electronic device, menu, or any other form that permits the written declaration of all required nutrient content.</p>		

Now you know what to do; but do you know how to start?

The requirements are a lot to digest; and with so many minutely-specific rules covering so many situations – and we’ve really only covered the most commonly applicable rules, not every single point – it may leave restaurateurs with heartburn.

The FDA has worked overtime to make it so many, many establishments will need to refresh, revamp or even completely restart their approach to disclosing nutritional information, and the expense and logistics of that effort could prove to be challenging, especially for those food service vendors who frequently deal with the special situations described above. Fortunately, you’re not alone, and we’ve got some recommendations for mastering this challenge.

Four Top Options For Updating Menus and Menu Boards



Option #1: Retrofit

No need to get totally rid of your current boards: just retrofit new panels onto the existing hardware. No construction and very little downtime, yet a completely new menu board system. Better yet, you can order retrofit menu boards at a stock price that can be tailored to look custom. This is probably the single fastest, least expensive solution available.

Option #2: Reface

Want to keep your hardware and your existing boards in place? Go for a re-face. Solutions can be created to lay right on top of your existing boards, so you completely cover what’s already there. A magnetic solution is ideal, as it’s easy to swap out information on the fly as needed.





Option #3: Replace

Want a fresh look, without sacrificing your brand or your budget? It's easier to replace your entire menu board system than you think. This is a good opportunity to “upgrade” your menu boards; for example, you can choose poster-based or magnetic systems to allow for high changeability, which may be a must-have if you rapidly rotate your menu. If you are really pressed for time, you can also purchase stock menu boards (order right on the Internet), which can be delivered to your location in no time at all.

Option #4: Go Digital

Don't let the word “digital” put you off; these need be neither expensive nor overly complicated. Digital menu boards allow you to easily manage information, schedule day-parting and update promotions and LTOs. These typically also come with pro designed templates to match your look and brand, with a custom portal to access and update content from any computer or smart device. They offer the utmost in flexibility and convenience.



NOT SURE?

Undecided whether to retrofit or replace? Trying to determine if digital makes sense for your establishment? Can't decide between custom menu boards or stock pieces available at flat prices online? Wondering if you need design, fabrication and installation in one?

If you want it done right: Choose a company with relevant experience, and lots of it. Solid experience not only ensures the supplier knows what they're doing; it also means they've probably already encountered anything and everything that could go wrong, so they already know how to prevent or correct problems, so you don't lose time.

If you need it fast: Your single best bet for quick and affordable compliance is a single-source vendor who can offer all four options, a wealth of experience and a wide array of product options under one roof. Single-sourcing means the company can bring consultative benefits to the table: such a vendor will be able to assess your current menu boards and budget, along with your future goals (e.g. increase sales, better establish brand identity, ramp-up promotions), and guide you to the best solution for you - NOT just what has worked for everyone else or what's cheapest but may lead you astray from your business goals. Retrofitting, re-facing and even replacements can be done fast with the right supplier.

If you need fabrication and installation too: If you're replacing your menu board or going digital, you may need an extra layer of service: fabrication and installation. Again, a single-source supplier is your best bet. Not only will your objectives be centralized and aligned through all phases of the project, a single-source supplier will have relationships with installation teams across the country to ensure a fast and seamless rollout. You can save hours of frustration and indecision and let the trusted experts do their job - and they can help you do yours.

Conclusion

While some lawmakers have introduced bills to redefine the law's scope — for example, one bill would exclude pizza chains and grocers — if you pin your hopes on a “maybe” law passing, you may leave yourself without sufficient time to prepare. And for the time being, regardless of anyone's opinion on the new rules, the new guidelines are going to be the new normal for restaurant operators.

The good news: most food service operators will be able to achieve compliance relatively easily.

Even better, they'll be able to do so without sacrificing brand or budget. Service providers like VGS (who's been doing this for 30 years) have become experts in the law's new requirements so you don't have to. Whether you opt to cover your existing menu boards, completely replace your existing solution, or upgrade to the latest menu technology, compliance is as simple as – you guessed it – ordering from a menu.

Whatever you do, don't settle. Despite the fast-approaching deadline, with so many choices available, you can still find a good solution that will represent your brand and perhaps even improve on your current menu boards. Explore your options until you find the one that's right for you.

**Call VGS today for a
complimentary consultation**

ABOUT VGS

Visual Graphic Systems Inc.

Online:
www.vgsonline.com
www.studiodcreative.com

Offline:
330 Washington Avenue
Carlstadt, NJ 07072

Phone:
800-203-0301 | 201-528-2700

Fax:
201-528-0890