



# Protect our Variance

*A collaborative effort between Mesa County Public Health and the Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce to recognize businesses who are ensuring customer safety as it relates to COVID-19 safety.*

**DIRECT LINK TO FORM:** <https://forms.gle/1CHf6sy6oo8CZ5jT8>

## **General Information**

Protect our Variance, or the 5-star rating program is a recognition program for establishments implementing public health recommendations related to COVID-19. It is for all types of businesses, and participation is voluntary. To qualify, the MCPH compliance team visits business applicants and scores them on measures related to their implementation of safety precautions for COVID-19.

## **What is the purpose of the program?**

Many consumers are fearful of returning to local businesses during COVID-19. Others have underlying health conditions or risk factors and want to know if the facility is taking precautions to ensure customer safety. This program is a way to promote establishments implementing public health recommendations related to COVID-19.

This [information sheet](#) can be printed and given to interested businesses.

## **Are businesses that don't have this '5-star' rating unsafe?**

No. Participation in this program is entirely **voluntary**. Its intent is a resource for those looking for establishments complying with public health orders, providing consumers a list of places meeting rating requirements.

## **How does a business qualify?**

Businesses submit a Safety Plan to MCPH ([link to submit](#)) to request a visit by an MCPH representative to conduct an audit for the Variance Protection Program.

If a business has already submitted a reopening application and/or received an audit from an MCPH representative, they can still complete the 5-star interest [form](#).

A Mesa County Public Health (MCPH) representative visits establishments who completed interest forms and safety plans, conducting an audit of their procedures

related to COVID-19. The representative scores them on a series of items required in the current public health order and outlined in the reopening plan.

Businesses must receive a score of **45** points in key areas of:

- Mask Use
- Social Distancing Marking
- Facility Capacity
- Written Schedule for Cleaning
- Active Monitoring of Symptoms

Establishments are scored based on a one-time observation; follow-up visits are conducted as needed.

### **Can a business see the scoring sheet to know the measures they'll be evaluated on?**

As part of the public health order and reopening plan, a business submits its [safety plan](#) and agrees to follow best practices for implementation. The 'score sheet' is kept between the auditor and the individual business.

### **What if I have several locations? Does the rating apply to all of them?**

Because floor plans, capacity, and other measures vary from location to location, submit an application for each facility.

### **Can a business earn anything other than 5 stars?**

No. In order to qualify for the program, the 5-star criterion must be met. Businesses can request a reinspection if they do not qualify on their first audit but make improvements afterward. MCPH representatives explain the process during their audit.

### **Is this just for restaurants?**

No. All types of businesses can qualify, from retail stores to banks, restaurants to pet supply stores. Establishments of all types are eligible.

### **What does the business get?**

Businesses receive a window cling sticker (issued by the Chamber) to promote their business as a 5-star rating recipient. In addition, a weekly newspaper advertisement features establishments earning the designation. There is a running list of 5-star establishments published on the MCPH [website](#).

## Where can I direct people who want to participate or learn more?

You may find these links and forms useful:

- [Interest Form](#) - for businesses who have already submitted the reopening application but were not scored or rated under the previous system.
- MCPH Website - under [Current Dial Level](#), a [news release](#) announcing the program as well as a [current partner list](#)
- [Protect our Variance Facebook page](#) (managed by the GJ Chamber)

Businesses in need of additional information can email [healthinfo@mesacounty.us](mailto:healthinfo@mesacounty.us) for follow-up by an appropriate staff member. This includes questions about specific audits (completed or scheduled).

## Is there anything I can do to help the program be successful?

Encourage businesses to see if they qualify, and tell your friends and family to look for the 5-star rating at the businesses they visit. Don't see a designation? Encourage the business to participate.