



## United States Marine Corps

Internet: <http://www.29palms.marines.mil/>

Communication Strategy and Operations Office

P.O. Box 788200

Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center

Twentynine Palms, CA 92278

**For more information:**

Phone: (760) 830-6747

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **TWENTYNINE PALMS TO REOPEN COMMISSARY**

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. – The commissary at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, California, is reopening Saturday, Oct. 21, said Keith Hagenbuch, the Defense Commissary Agency’s executive director for store operations.

That announcement comes after the Twentynine Palms commanding general, Marine Maj. Gen. William F. Mullen III, approved the store to reopen based on the inspection results of military food inspectors.

“The military community at Twentynine Palms has its commissary benefit back in a safe, clean and pest-free environment,” Hagenbuch said. “Throughout the store closure, the installation and DeCA had one mission: Ensure all health and sanitation standards were met before we reopened.”

The store is set to reopen Saturday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and will also be open on Monday, Oct. 23. The store will resume its normal Monday closing schedule Oct. 30.

As part of the store reopening, DeCA and its industry partners are conducting a customer appreciation event to thank patrons for their patience during the closure. The event will include the following special discounts and giveaways:

- Average savings of 30 percent and more on pumpkins, holiday grapes, mangoes, new crop apples, bell peppers and cucumbers
- Average savings of 40 percent and more on boneless ribeye steaks, New York strip steaks, tri-tip steaks, T-bone steaks and chuck steaks
- Special discounts on paper products, detergents, soda, chips, beverages, juices, energy drinks, snacks and holiday baking products
- Industry giveaways such as more than \$5,000 in commissary gift cards, a big screen TV, mountain bikes, children's toys, footballs, hats and gift bags with health and beauty care samples

The Twentynine Palms Commissary has been closed since Oct. 11 after military food inspectors found a health code violation resulting from a rodent control issue. DeCA immediately sent a team of public health, sanitation, engineer and store operations experts to work with the installation's military health personnel and the pest control contractor to address the issue.

To reopen the store, DeCA performed a thorough cleaning of the facility, said Lt. Col. (P) Alisa Wilma, DeCA's director of public health and safety.

"As we got clearance from the pest control contractors to move forward into areas that were showing no activity, we had a small army of store associates deep cleaning coolers, freezers, display areas and floors before any products were restocked," Wilma said. Equipment that had been disassembled for inspection, cleaning and rodent monitoring also had to be reassembled and prepared for store operation.

The store passed a comprehensive inspection by the base military food inspectors that focused on the areas that prompted the Oct. 11 closure, Wilma said. "The commissary met all the standards of the Tri Service Food Code before we reopened."

While the store was closed, DeCA served hundreds of patrons, Oct. 18-20, through special sidewalk sales of milk, eggs, bread, beverages, water, cereal, snacks, paper products and detergent. All of the products had been inspected by military food inspectors and cleared for sale.

Since Oct. 11, commissary officials stayed in constant contact with their industry distributors. Once a target date for reopening took shape, the store placed product orders earlier in the week with pending delivery dates.

“We cannot stress enough how much we appreciate the patience of our patrons at Twentynine Palms during this store closure,” Hagenbuch said. “We regret any inconvenience to them. Our job, for this store and all our commissaries worldwide, is to deliver our patrons’ benefit in the healthiest, safest manner possible.”