

DEPARTMENT OF WEIGHTS & MEASURES



PROTECTING THE INTERESTS
OF BUYERS AND SELLERS
OF COMMODITIES



NAPA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF WEIGHTS & MEASURES

1710 Soscol Avenue, Suite 3
Napa, CA 94559-1315
(707) 253-4357
toll-free (877) 279-2980
FAX (707) 253-4881

7292 Silverado Trail
Napa, CA 94558
(707) 944-8714
FAX (707) 944-0984



WEIGHTS and MEASURES

Consumer Protection/Business Protection



Weights and Measures is mandated by state law to protect the interests of the buyer and seller to ensure honesty and integrity of everyday business transactions. This protection is accomplished through continuous and systematic inspection of all equipment that weighs or measures a commodity that is sold. This means every scale, gas pump and electric meter is checked to insure it is accurate and correct. We check scanner systems for pricing accuracy and prepackaged products such as meat and cheese, to insure the stated net contents is accurate. Every transaction involving the exchange of goods, property, and service is affected in a very vital way by some form of weights and measures.

The use of uniform weights and measures is extremely important, even though many buyers and sellers are rarely aware of them.

Weights and Measures may be ranked among the necessities of life to every individual of human society. They enter into the economical arrangements and daily concerns of every family. They are necessary to every occupation of human industry; to the distribution and security of every species of property; to every transaction of trade and commerce; to the labors of husbandman; to the ingenuity of the artificer; to the studies of the philosopher; to the researches of the antiquarian; to the navigation of the mariner and the marches of the soldier; to all the exchanges of peace, and all the operations of war. The knowledge of them, as in established use, is among the first elements of education and is often learned by those who learn nothing else, not even to read and write. This knowledge is riveted in the memory by the habitual application of it to the employments of men throughout life.

John Quincy Adams

Excerpt from the Report on Weights and Measures by the Secretary of State made to the Senate on February 22, 1821.

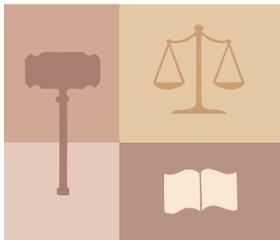
WEIGHTS AND MEASURES OFFERS PROTECTION TO THE CONSUMER THROUGH THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS:

1. **Device Inspection** – inspect and test all commercially used weighing and measuring devices, including scales, such as: computing, crane, dormant, platform, livestock, LPG, vapor, hopper, vehicle; and meters, such as: gasoline dispensers, taxi meters, electric and water. Devices that do not pass inspection are taken out of service until repaired. Napa County's Weights and Measures inspectors check over 900 scales and 1,600 measuring devices each year to ensure accuracy in the market place.
2. **Quantity Control** – inspect packaged commodities to ensure they contain the proper amount and have the correct labeling. This program also investigates deceptive packaging, makes test purchases to ensure compliance and checks the accuracy of price scanners.
3. **Weighmaster** – inspect licensed weighmasters to ensure the accuracy of the certificates issued, such as those for agricultural products and moving household goods.
4. **Petroleum** – check the quality and labeling of petroleum products as well as service station advertising. This includes checking gasoline, octane and lead content; as well as quality standards of motor oils and anti freeze.
5. **Support Services** – investigate all complaints received from consumers; initiate investigations into possible unlawful practices; coordinate with the District Attorney in the prosecution of violators; conduct educational programs, displays, and brochures to educate the public in proper shopping habits.

ADVICE TO THE CONSUMER

- Watch the weighing or measuring instrument. Make sure it starts at zero or you may be paying for something you didn't get.
- When buying gasoline, look at the pump meter before the start of fuel delivery. The meter should be cleared and the computer set at zero.
- Packaged size may be deceptive – don't be fooled by apparent size. Remember that KING SIZE, GIANT SIZE, FAMILY SIZE, etc., mean nothing. Read the label for quantity statement. Compare prices per ounce between different sizes and between different brands.
- Check your receipts, especially scanned items on sale, for price accuracy.
- Buy solid commodities by weight, rather than by count, whenever possible.
- Learn the unit price (price per pound, per quart, etc.) of what you buy and make sure that you are paying the correct price for the quantity received.
- The weight of paper wrapping and the containers used in prepackaging meat and other items **must not be included**. All packaged items must indicate NET WEIGHT.
- Learn to read scale and meter indications and observe the weighing and measuring of your purchases.
- Just as you demand accurate change from a cashier, demand accurate weight and measure in your purchases to avoid being "shortchanged".
- Some stores provide scales on which you can check weights of your purchases. Use them.
- Propane meters must be reset by the attendant fueling your bottle; watch that the meter is zeroed before the attendant begins to fuel.

Report suspected inaccuracies or violations of weights and measure laws and regulations to the Department of Weights and Measures. All consumer complaints will be investigated.



WE RESPOND TO AND RESOLVE CITIZENS' COMPLAINTS



SHELF PRICE/SCANNER



% OFF NOT TAKEN AT REGISTER



DECEPTIVE PACKAGING



SHORT WEIGHT PRODUCTS



SHORT MEASURE GASOLINE DELIVERY



OCTANE RATING IN QUESTION



WATER IN FUEL



RECYCLING INACCURACIES



POSTED OR ADVERTISED
PRICE NOT HONORED

If you suspect inaccuracies or violations, notify the Department of Weights and Measures immediately.

Information Programs are available to any organization or school. Call the office to schedule an appointment.