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ACS | advice

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

If you are selling unwrapped food that you need to weigh (such as confectionery, fruit or vegetables) before the customer receives it, then you will need to comply with weights and measures laws. This guide provides an overview of what is required of you as a business owner in terms of weighing food accurately and ensuring that the price indications, scales and weights that you use are legal.

1. INTRODUCTION

Main principles

The most important things to know about weighing foods for sale are:

- The way that you display prices for unwrapped fruit, vegetables and confectionery is regulated.
- Some vegetables can be sold by the bunch and certain fruits and vegetables can be sold by number.
- Some soft fruits can be sold by the punnet.
- If you sell unwrapped fruit, vegetables and confectionery by weight it has to be in kilograms and grams (metric) – but you can give imperial (pounds and ounces) price indications alongside metric ones.
- The price per pound/ounce can be marked, but it cannot be more prominent than the price per kilo/100g.
- Customers must know the weight of produce before they buy it.
- The scales that you use must be suitable for the products you are weighing and be accurate.
- Scales are passed as ‘fit for use for trade’ by a trading standards officer or an ‘approved qualifier’.
- Legal scales will either have a stamp in a lead seal or stickers to prove this.
- It is against the law to have seriously incorrect scales or to alter scales. It is recommended that you test your scales regularly.
- Any weights you use with the scales must be stamped with the crown stamp.
- Scales should be visible to the customer who should be able to see you weighing the goods.

Getting outside help

In almost all cases you should be able to speak to your Trading Standards Service at your local council and ask for advice about the most appropriate type of scales to have in your premises. Some trading standards services will visit your shop at your request to help you with this. You should identify a reputable scale supplier – they will also be able to offer you advice on the most appropriate type of equipment to use and will also be able to service the scale and help you to make sure it remains accurate.



2. MANAGING WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Look closely at your shop and stock room area and think about what the risks are that someone might injure themselves; think about how and where items are stacked; what, if any, trip hazards there are, the lighting in the shop and security for staff.

Identifying these risks and having in place measures to manage them is what is required of you in managing health and safety.

APPROVED SCALES

Scales need to be approved before they can be used.

APPROVED WEIGHTS

Weights used to test scales must be approved.



IN-STORE DISPLAYS / PoS

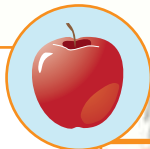
Weights and prices must also be quoted in advertisements or on posters.

PRICES IN METRIC AND IMPERIAL

Prices must be displayed per 100g and/or kilograms, but pounds and ounces can also be used if certain rules are followed.

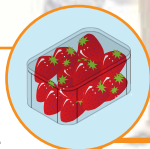
INDIVIDUAL ITEMS

Some fruit and vegetables can be sold individually without the need to weigh them.



PUNNETS

Some soft fruits can be sold by the punnet.



ITEMS BY BUNCH

Some vegetables can be sold by the bunch.



Metric facts and figures

Weight

1 Kilogram	1000 grams	2.2 pounds
113 grams	4 ounces	1/4 pound
1 pound	0.45359 kilo	453.59 grams
1 ounce	28.35 grams	

Length

1 metre	1000 mm	100 cm
1 metre	3.28 feet	39.37 inches

Capacity

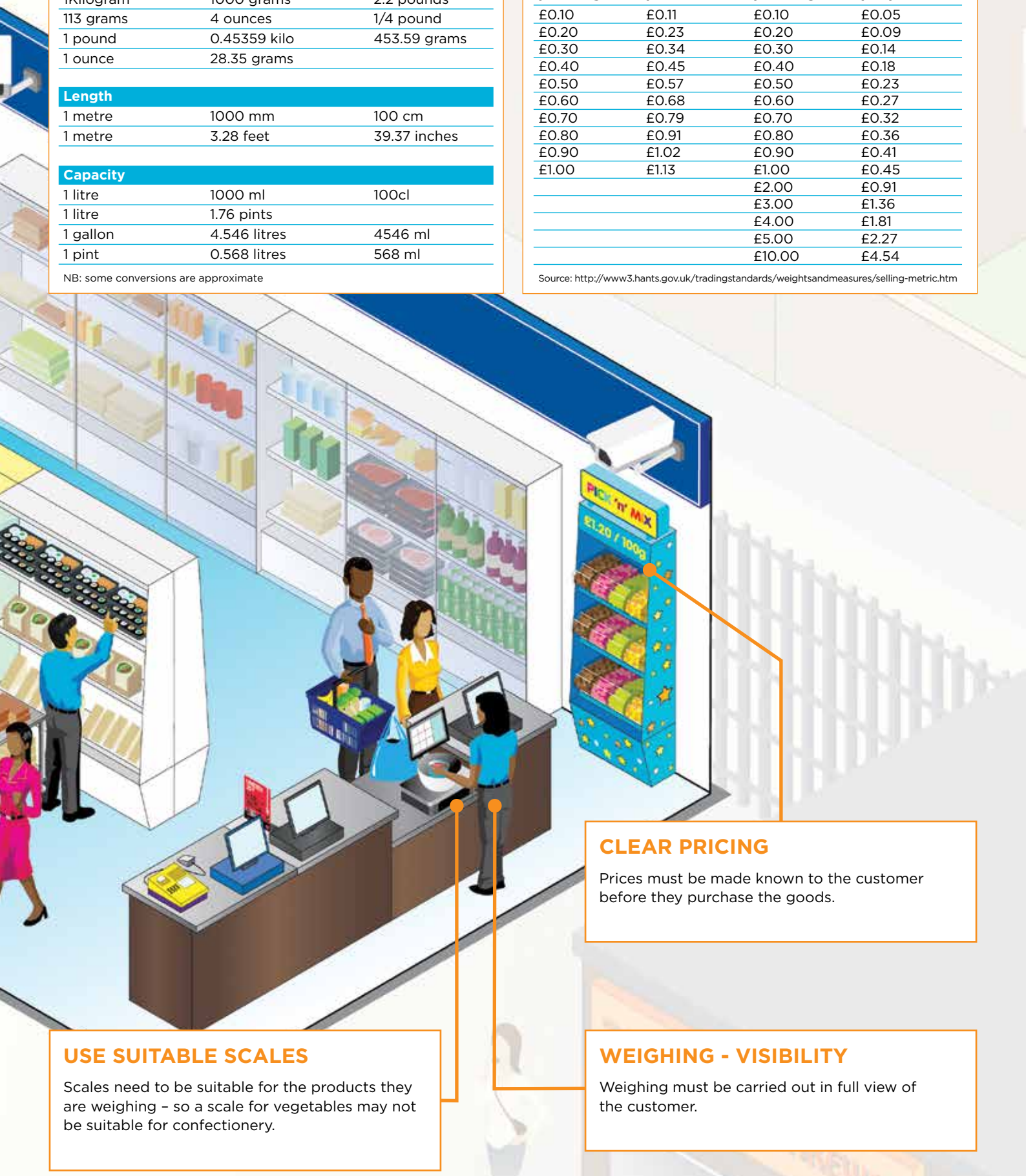
1 litre	1000 ml	100cl
1 litre	1.76 pints	
1 gallon	4.546 litres	4546 ml
1 pint	0.568 litres	568 ml

NB: some conversions are approximate

Metric price conversion chart

Unit price per 100g	Unit price per 1/4 lb	Unit price per kilogram	Unit price per pound
£0.10	£0.11	£0.10	£0.05
£0.20	£0.23	£0.20	£0.09
£0.30	£0.34	£0.30	£0.14
£0.40	£0.45	£0.40	£0.18
£0.50	£0.57	£0.50	£0.23
£0.60	£0.68	£0.60	£0.27
£0.70	£0.79	£0.70	£0.32
£0.80	£0.91	£0.80	£0.36
£0.90	£1.02	£0.90	£0.41
£1.00	£1.13	£1.00	£0.45
		£2.00	£0.91
		£3.00	£1.36
		£4.00	£1.81
		£5.00	£2.27
		£10.00	£4.54

Source: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/tradingstandards/weightsandmeasures/selling-metric.htm>



CLEAR PRICING

Prices must be made known to the customer before they purchase the goods.

WEIGHING - VISIBILITY

Weighing must be carried out in full view of the customer.

USE SUITABLE SCALES

Scales need to be suitable for the products they are weighing – so a scale for vegetables may not be suitable for confectionery.

3. PRICING

Prices must be marked per 100 grams or kilogram. The price per pound can also be marked, but it can't be more prominent than the price per kilogram. Some examples follow:

So if a customer asks for a pound of apples or half a pound of sweets you must weigh in metric and sell the metric equivalent. Conversion charts are available for this purpose (see page 5).

 **23p** per lb loose **carrots**

 **23p** per lb **50p** per 100g loose **carrots**

 **50p** per 100g loose **carrots**

 **50p** per 100g **23p** per lb loose **carrots**

4. SELLING BY THE BUNCH, NUMBER OR PUNNET

If you sell loose produce then you generally sell this by weight, measured in metric amounts. You can do this by either providing scales for the customer to weigh and label product themselves or be weighed by a member of staff at the point of purchase.

There are long standing rules related to the sale of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Produce that can be sold *individually*

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Apples | Figs (fresh) | Passion fruit |
| Apricots | Garlic | Pawpaw |
| Artichokes (globe) | Grapefruit | Peaches |
| Aubergines | Guavas | Pears |
| Avocados | Kiwi fruit | Pineapple |
| Bananas | Kohlrabi | Plums |
| Beetroots | Lemons | Pomegranates |
| (including cooked) | Lettuce | Pomelo |
| Cabbage | Limes | Pumpkins |
| Cauliflower | Mangoes | Radishes |
| Capsicum | Marrows | Shaddock |
| Celery | Melons | Soft citrus fruit |
| Coconuts | Nectarines | Tomatoes |
| Corn on cob | Onions (other than spring) | Ugli |
| Cucumber | Orange | |
| Fennel | | |

Produce that can be sold by the *bunch*

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Asparagus | Garlic | Parsley |
| Beetroots | Mint | Radishes |
| Carrots | Mustard and cress | Salad cress |
| Chives | Onions (including spring) | Turnips |
| Endives | | Watercress |

Produce that can be sold by the *punnet*

- | | | |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Bilberries | Cherries | Raspberries |
| Blackberries | Cranberries | Redcurrants |
| Blackcurrants | Gooseberries | Strawberries |
| Boysenberries | Loganberries | Tayberries |
| Brambles | Mulberries | Whitecurrants |

If punnets carry a weight indication, this might be vulnerable to the following:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| a) Fruit drying out. | d) Shelf markers required. |
| b) Growing mould. | e) Package weight needed prior to sale. |
| c) Customers re-distributing fruit. | |

5. SCALES

You must make the weight of the goods known to the buyer before payment is made. This should be done by weighing the goods in front of the customer - the scales must be clearly visible.

Your scales must weigh in metric units. You can also use machines which show kilograms and pounds, as long as the metric units are at least prominent as the imperial units and used for every sale.

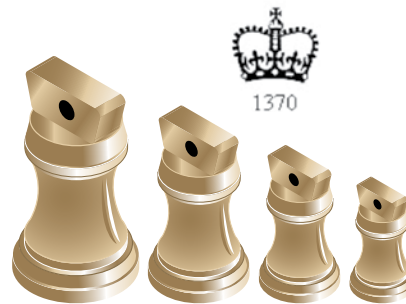
Any computer systems and ticket-printing machines must work in grams and kilograms and you should make sure that you and your staff are familiar with pricing and weighing in grams and kilograms.

Most new designs of electronic scales will have to bear a green sticker with the letter 'M' on it in black, together with the approved qualifier's identification sticker. These indicate that the scale is legal.

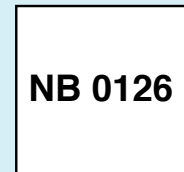
Next to the 'M' sticker will be a unique identification sticker either like the one '1234' below or the 'NB' type (where the number is overprinted using a thermal printer). These green 'use for trade' stickers and qualification stickers can only be placed on the equipment by an approved qualifier or an inspector.

Older equipment may have a trading standards officer's 'crown stamp' instead.

These look like this: 2007



Use for trade and qualification stickers



Weights

Weights that are used with the scales must be stamped with the crown stamp.

You must ensure that your scales are accurate and testing them daily with a stamped weight is the best way of doing this. Your scale and weight supplier should also be able to test your scales and weights for you. For further advice of the frequency of these tests speak to your local trading standards office.

Enforcement

You are likely to receive visits from Trading Standards officers to ensure that your scales are accurate and that you are displaying prices in the correct way. If an inspector finds equipment that is incorrect, which has a lead seal crown stamp, it may be obliterated by a six-pointed star. If it has a green 'M' sticker then other stickers may be placed upon the scale. The equipment must not be used until repaired and re-stamped.



Alternatively, a notice may be given by the officer requiring you to repair the scale within a specified timeframe. Having a servicing and repair contract for the scale is therefore advised.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is provided by the Association of Convenience Stores in consultation with Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards. It was last updated in January 2024. Please refer to the ACS website for the most current version of this guidance.

ACS Primary Authority Scheme

This advice was developed by ACS, Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards and Surrey Fire and Rescue Service; as part of a dedicated primary authority scheme. This means that all the advice that has this mark against it is 'Assured Advice'.

Assured Advice means that if you adopt this policy in your business, then it must be respected by all other local authorities and they cannot ask you to adopt a different policy.



This guide covers a range of different issues of best practice and law. Those that qualify as assured advice are marked by this hallmark.

To benefit from assured advice you must sign up to the ACS scheme. All ACS members can sign up to the ACS Primary Authority Scheme for details of how to join up visit www.acs.org.uk/advice

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