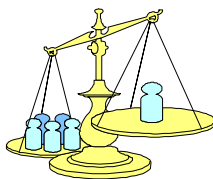


# SPOTLIGHT ON WEIGHTS & MEASURES

## SONOMA COUNTY SEALER OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES



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### QUANTITY CONTROL COMPLAINTS

A complaint was received that the readout on a scale at a retail seasonal food stand was not legible. An investigation revealed that, while the scale was weighing accurately, the readout was faded to the point that it was unreadable. A warning was issued that the scale must be repaired. The owner had not complied by the re-inspection, and the scale was seized. The business purchased a new scale, old scale was returned after the owner signed an agreement to refrain from using the scale until it has been repaired.

A complaint was also received regarding a grocery store's advertised price. Corn flakes were advertised as two for \$3.00, but rang up at \$3.25. An investigation confirmed this complaint. A can of soda purchased at the same time rang up as the price of a six-pack. The investigator explained to the consumer that a can taken from a six-pack would register the six-pack price so it is important not to break the pack for a single item.

Another complaint received was no net weight on the label of packaged Brie cheese. The consumer acknowledged the purchase had been made two months ago, and the store no longer carries that brand of cheese. The complaint could not be confirmed.

### DEVICE COMPLAINTS

Five hundred sixty-seven devices were tested in August and September. Devices consist of

gasoline pumps, scales, gas and electric meters,

taximeters, timing, and other measuring or weighing devices.

Three electric meter complaints were received. The mobile home park residents each thought their bill was unreasonably high. The meters were tested and found to be measuring accurately.

One water meter complaint against a mutual water company was received. The water company brought the meter to our office for testing, and the meter was found to be accurate.

Six complaints about gas stations were also received. Three of those complaints were the pumps dispensed more gasoline than the vehicle's tank capacity. Another complaint was the nozzle did not shut off and gas splashed on the customer's clothes and shoes. One consumer tried to fill a small gas can and the gas blasted in his face. All of these pumps were tested and found to be operating correctly. The final complaint was the station does not have a Disabled Driver Policy posted and she was refused help in fueling her car. The station will be informed that this policy must be posted and assistance must be give to disabled drivers.

### WEIGHMASTER COMPLAINTS

An anonymous complaint was made that a winery was purchasing grapes from various growers and failing to issue the required Weighmaster certificates. An inspector verified the complaint. The winery staff involved were unaware of the Weighmaster program. A Weighmaster packet was issued and the winery will apply for a Weighmaster license from the state of California.

## FIREWOOD COMPLAINTS

Two firewood complaints were received. Each party felt they had not received a full cord of wood. Inspectors measured each stack of firewood and found that both were less than a full cord. Both complaints were against the same firewood dealer and the dealer was issued a Notice of Violation and a written warning that any further complaints could result in appropriate actions.

## MISCELLANEOUS

The staff has been extremely busy checking winery scales. The grape crush is winding down; inspectors will now have a chance to catch up on a myriad of other types of device inspections.

## CONSUMER TIPS

If you have a consumer complaint, these are some things you should remember:

- First ask to speak with the store or business manager. Most managers would much rather address any problems immediately rather than be reported to Weights & Measures.
- Remain calm and respectful when reporting your concerns to store personnel. Angry or accusatory statements will not help resolve the problem. Reflect on how you would like to be treated.

## CONSUMER CORNER

**Q.** “I purchased some vegetables at an organic food stand. There was no scale for me to check the weight of what I wanted to buy. Is that legal?”

**A.** Yes, a seller is not required to provide a weighing device for the consumer’s use. Scales that are provided in the produce department of larger grocery stores are for the customer’s convenience. These scales are not certified and provide only an estimation of weight.

**Q.** “I purchased a bag of apples at the grocery store. The store sign only listed the price per bag, but not how much they were per pound. Doesn’t the price per pound have to be listed?”

**A.** No, not as long as it is clearly marked that the advertised price is “per bag”.

