



Weights & Measures Regulations

What packaged goods are, how they are labelled, units of measurements used and compliance with weights and measures regulation.

How packaged goods are regulated

The Weights and Measures (Packaged Goods) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/659) set out a programme of quantity control for packaged goods. The regulations require consumers to be informed on quantity and protect against short measure, while allowing businesses flexibility to control quantity on the production line within specific tolerances.

A consolidated version of the regulations has been produced to show the changes made since they were originally made. The consolidation is for guidance purposes only and has no legal standing.

What packaged goods are

A 'package' is a combination of a product and the package it is placed in without the purchaser being present and whereby the quantity of the package cannot be altered without the packaging being opened or modified.

Packaged goods that fall within the scope of the Packaged Goods Regulations are those made up in a quantity between 5 g and 25 kg and 5 ml and 25 l. These include both foodstuffs and non-foodstuffs.

How they are packed

The legislation sets out information for packers and importers on what they need to do to comply with the law. There are three areas covered:

Three Packers Rules

These set out 3 rules that packers and importers must comply with:

1. The contents of the packages must not be less on average than the nominal quantity
2. The proportion of packages which are short of the stated quantity by more than a defined amount (the 'tolerable negative error') should be less than a specified level
3. No package should be short by twice the tolerable negative error

They provide protection for consumers on short measure.

Equipment and records

Equipment used to make up or check packaged goods must be suitable for purpose. Records of any checks undertaken must also be kept.

Labelling

Packers and importers must ensure that packaged goods are labelled with quantity. The information must be visible, easy to read and not be able to be damaged.

Consumer protection

It is the duty of the packer to make sure the quantity of packaged goods complies with the regulations. Enforcement of the law is carried out by Local Authority Trading Standards.

Using the 'e' mark

Packages that meet the requirements of the Packaged Goods Regulations and are between 5 g to 10 kg and 5 ml to 10 l can apply the 'e' mark.



Packaged goods labelled with the 'e' mark are declaring their compliance with the requirements of the 'average system' under Directive 76/211/EEC and are not subject to further weights and measures regulation. It is an optional choice for the packer whether to display the 'e' mark.

Packages which do not display the 'e' mark and are to be traded outside the UK must meet the regulations set by the destination country.

The 'e' mark is a metrological passport to trade allowing free access within the EEA and its respective markets.

Food labelling

Since 13 December 2014 the rules on quantity labelling of pre-packaged foods have changed. Businesses must comply with the mandatory quantity labelling requirements of EU Regulation No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers (FIC) which have direct effect in the UK.

Units of measurement

Having a single consistent set of units of measurement in use for trade reduces costs for business and enables consumers to make price and quantity comparisons more easily. The UK changed over to metric units in the 1990s with the final changeover, for loose goods, taking place on 1 January 2000. The UK is now substantially metric, with the vast majority of trade taking place in metric units.

Metric units of measurement must be used for most transactions regulated by the Weights and Measures Act 1985.

In addition, imperial units are permitted to be used for the trade of the:

- pint for draught beer and cider
- pint for bottled milk
- troy ounce for precious metals

However, imperial units may continue to be used alongside metric in dual labelling and consumers can continue to request imperial quantities.

In 2009 the legislation was updated to remove the deadline that would have prevented imperial from being used alongside metric in dual labelling in the future. There are no further deadlines.

The following table gives conversions from metric to imperial and vice versa.

1 litre (l) = 1.76 pints (pt)

1 pint (pt) = 0.568 litres (l)

1 kilogram (kg) = 2.205 pounds (l (b))

1 pound (lb) = 0.454 kilograms (kg)

100 grams (g) = 3.527 ounces (oz)

1 ounce (oz) = 28 grams (g)

1 kilometre (km) = 0.621 miles

1 mile = 1.609 kilometres (km)

Trading Standards Offices are responsible for enforcement of weights and measures legislation and can offer further advice and guidance on compliance.

Specified quantities

Specified Quantities are the fixed sizes certain goods must be sold in. In 2009 all specified quantities for pre-packaged foods, except for wines and spirits, were deregulated. Specified Quantities for wines and spirits have been retained and apply across the EU. Further changes were made to Specified Quantities in 2011.

There are 2 pieces of legislation covering Specified Quantities, the:

- [Weights and Measures \(Specified Quantities\) \(Pre-packed Products\) Regulations 2009](#)
- [Weights and Measures \(Specified Quantities\) \(Unwrapped Bread and Intoxicating Liquor\) Order 2011](#)

Guidance on Regulations



[The Weights and Measures \(Packaged Goods\) Regulations 2006 guidance for business](#)

Source of information



Regulatory Delivery

Regulatory Delivery
Part of Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy



GOV.UK

Please note

This information is intended for guidance; only the courts can give an authoritative interpretation of the law.

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